

A Hate so Sweet, A Love so Bitter

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[Aemond "One-Eye" Targaryen](#), [Original Female Character\(s\)](#), [Visenya Targaryen \(Daughter of Rhaenyra\)](#), [Jacaerys Velaryon](#), [Lucerys Velaryon \(Son of Rhaenyra\)](#), [Joffrey Velaryon](#), [Daemon Targaryen](#), [Rhaenyra Targaryen](#), [Viserys I Targaryen](#), [Alicent Hightower](#), [Otto Hightower](#), [Aegon II Targaryen](#), [Helaena Targaryen](#), [Daeron Targaryen \(Son of Viserys I\)](#), [Laenor Velaryon](#), [Corlys "The Sea Snake" Velaryon](#), [Laena Velaryon \(Daughter of Corlys\)](#), [Rhaenys Targaryen Velaryon](#), [Vermithor](#) |

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by [butterflies and dragons](#)

Summary

"Then why are you here Aemond, if you hate me so? Why are you here?" Visenya demanded, her eyes glistening with tears of frustration and anger as her sharp words were forced into the air. Aemond's face grew hateful and fierce.

"Because I cannot bear to leave you!" He snarled out, as if disgusted with himself. "I am here because even though I loathe your family and wish I could run you through with my sword to bring an end to this mess, I cannot." He turned away from her for a moment and Visenya saw his chest heave with what she assumed to be hate. Then his head snapped around and he stalked towards her as quick as a flash. Visenya stumbled back, fearing that he had finally decided to finish her off. Her back pressed against the tree and there was nowhere else for her to go as Aemond stood over her, his presence invading her senses. As he looked down at her he let out a fierce snarl and took her face into his hands, pressing his lips to hers in a fierce kiss as he claimed her mouth and pressed her to the tree. When he broke the kiss he pressed his forehead to hers, still cradling her face as he looked deep into her eyes with that undefinable emotion that she could not place in his eyes. "I am here because I love you"

Prologue

In 114 AC the Red Keep holds its breath as Princess Rhaenyra goes into labor for the first time. They hold their breath and pray for her health, and for her heir, remembering the misfortune of the Princess's own mother.

The birth of the firstborn child of Princess Rhaenyra, the Princess of Dragonstone is not one that is particularly fast or easy. She labors for well over a day as her body strains and pushes to expel her child into the world. Rhaenyra herself is racked with unimaginable pain, but beyond that her mind is filled with utter terror as she recalls her own mother's death in a bed such as this as she labored to bring an heir. Rhaenyra's birthing bed is full of tears as she cries in her fear and pain.

She calls out for comfort. She cries for her mother, for her father, for Laena, for Daemon, and she even cries for Laenor as he stands by her side, gripping her hand and murmuring encouragement. She curses the day Laenor was born and the day they were married. Many in the castle begin to whisper that Rhaenyra will end up just like her own mother when the babe does not come after the first day passes.

She labors in the spring months and the heat of Kings Landing creeps its way into her birthing chambers, adding to the stifling uncomfortableness that Rhaenyra is already suffering through. Even with the sun down there is no relief from the warmth that is crowding her. However as dawn approaches and the second day begins the Midwife finally announces that the head is crowning and Rhaenyra sobs in relief, Laenor's encouragements begin again with renewed vigor and she bears down, desperate to push the child out and finally gain relief.

Prince Jacaerys Targaryen (Targaryen for he will one day be king) the future prince of Dragonstone arrives and cries out his arrival as the midwife lifts him triumphantly. His mother begins to laugh in incredulousness and happiness. She has done what her mother had struggled to do so many

times, yet she has done it in her first try. Leanor crows at the arrival of his son and he swiftly leaves Rhaenyra's side to go watch as the midwives clean the newborn Prince.

He animatedly describes every detail of him to Rhaenyra, detailing the boy's aristocratic nose and black hair as well as the beautiful brown of his skin. Rhaenyra holds her arms out, demanding to be given her son and Laenor brings him over. However before she can even hold her firstborn, pain racks her body and Rhaenyra's arms drop as she throws her head back against the pillow and wails in pain. A flurry of panic takes over the room, Laenor swiftly handing his son back to the midwife as he rushes to his wife's side and the midwives' panicked voices ring out as they try to discover the source of the Princess's pain.

As the sun rises over Blackwater Bay, Visenya Velaryon comes screaming into the world, announcing for all to hear that their new Princess is here. The fresh sunlight bathes the room in a soft glow, catching onto the shine of her skin and she screams even more. The princess screams and screams for several minutes until she is finally placed in the arms of her mother. Only then does she quiet down and finally her beauty can be taken in and admired.

Jacaerys and Visenya could not look more unlike. With Black hair, darker skin, and strong features, Jacaerys Targaryen is every inch of a Baratheon-Targaryen-Velaryon prince. However as his eyes flutter open they all behold his shocking violet eyes. His eyes are that shade that Aegon the Conqueror himself had had, eyes Laenor carries too.

Opposite of him, Visenya has skin that is of a beautiful golden brown, a shock of silvery gold hair, and eyes of the deepest indigo. She is a scion of the Targaryen dynasty and its Old Valyrian Beauty. Her deep eyes are those which Queen Rhaenys, King Jaehaerys, Princess Rhaenys, Prince Baelon, and Princess Alyssa had once had. Rhaenyra traces her daughter's delicate features, her daughter's nose looks like Queen Aemma's, as Laenor admires his son and she swears in her heart to give her children the world. They are so precious and they deserve nothing less.

Laenor leans down and presses a kiss to Rhaenyra's forehead and then his daughter's, ever the proud father acting as if he had birthed the twin babes himself as he puffs his chest proudly. They had done their duty, something they had agreed was a must before they abandoned their marriage bed to seek out pleasure. They had provided the crown an heir and Driftmark a daughter and heir.

King Viserys has the bells rung every hour for the entire week after his grandchildren arrive and he even brings them before his court, holding Jacaerys in his arms as he sits the Iron Throne and bids his subjects to kneel for the heir who is second in line to the throne. Viserys cradles his granddaughter so sweetly as he tells her stories of their family and proclaims his granddaughter to be the most beautiful being in all of the world. He cries as he beholds her, as memories of Rhaenyra as a babe fill his mind, as he stares at her features which hold a painful similarity to his late most beloved wife.

When Princess Rhaenys arrives to meet her first grandchildren she is delighted at the sight of them, she takes Jace into her arms first and a tear slips from her cheek as she admires his violet eyes and black hair.

"He looks just like my mother." She whispers, her voice so soft Rhaenyra fears that the fearsome Queen Who Never Was may burst into sobs right then and there as she strokes her grandson's cheek. "He is a Baratheon-Targaryen Prince." She murmurs before looking up at Rhaenyra with glowing eyes and she hands the boy back to his father before taking her granddaughter into her arms. As she beholds the girl a true smile breaks out over her face. "Now this is a Valyrian Beauty. A true Princess of the Targaryen line." Rhaenys laughs, congratulating her son and gooddaughter. "One day Driftmark will sit in the hands of the most beautiful girl to grace both her family lines." Laenor laughs at his mother's boast.

"She looks a bit like you, mother." He tells her and Rhaenys nods in agreement.

“She looks the most like my grandmother. She’s got my grandmother, a bit of myself, some of your mother,” she says, giving a sad and soft smile to Rhaenyra. “And she has all of your own beauty, gooddaughter.” Rhaenyra laughs and thanks her goodmother for her kind words. “Our line has a Rhaenys and a Visenya once more. I cannot wait to see what her birth hails.” the Princess speaks.

“She will be the greatest of us all.” Rhaenyra agrees and they all fondly gaze at the most blessed and eternally beloved babes.

Aemond Targaryen was born in 110 AC and he screamed his displeasure to the world as he was forced into the world. He screamed as he was cleaned, he screamed as he was handed to and held by his mother, and he screamed even in the arms of his kingly father.

His birth was not one met with great commotion or rejoicing because he was the fourth child of the king. He was 3rd in line to the throne and a second son. No one really wanted or cared for Aemond and he knew it.

From the day of his birth and onwards Aemond was the one that was overlooked, the one no one picked. His own brother preferred the company of their nephews over him. Aegon, Jace, and Luke were always happy to exclude Aemond from their private group and to play vicious and cruel pranks on him, day after day.

No one wanted Aemond, that was no one except for his neice Visenya. Visenya and Aemond were inseperable for almost their entire childhood, always found playing together- laughing and talking. Even when his lady mother scolded and yelled at Aemond for spending time with the daughter of her rival and even when his Grandfather warned Aemond to leave Visenya, Aemond did not. He could not.

They did everything together, they played games like Dragons and Knights together and they even played with Aemond's toy swords together. When Jace, Luke, and Aegon would play a prank on him she would scold them within an inch of their life before grabbing Aemond's hand and hauling him away with an imperious and haughty nature telling Aemond to 'Not think of those horrid boys.' and how they were unworthy of his time.

Visenya didn't have a dragon either and that only helped to further their bond. Her own green and bronze egg had never hatched and even though the King had taken her up on his knee and told her not to fret she still was upset because of it. The king would tell Visenya to not worry because Viserys' egg had never hatched and neither had his brother Daemon's and yet they both mounted the almighty Balerion and Caraxes.

Viserys never gave these comforts to Aemond but Visenya would find him hidden in one of their hidden play spots and she would tell him those exact same words, telling him that one day they would go to the Dragonpit and claim the mightiest dragons for themselves. They would then spend the rest of the day pretending to be Aegon and Visenya, riding upon Balerion and Vhagar as they conquered all of Westeros.

Everything changed when Visenya was seven and Aemond was eleven.

They were in the Dragonpit for Senya and Jace's seventh birthday, watching as Jace tried to bond with Vermax. His broken Valyrian grated on Aemond's every nerve and he contemplated taking his own eyes out to escape the awfulness of being forced to listen to his nephew stutter his way through bonding with his dragon. Aemond himself had become fluent in High Valyrian well over 3 years ago in the hopes that it would help him to get a dragon but it had not. Yet here stood his nephew with his horrible, broken pronunciations of their esteemed mother tongue and a dragon of his own while Aemond and Visenya had none despite their fluency.

“I can’t stand to listen to this anymore.” Visenya whispers in his ear and Aemond nods vigorously. While Aegon attempts horrible flirting with Luke’s nursemaid and the Dragon keepers attempt to help Jace, Visenya grabs Aemond’s hand and they sneak down the tunnels of the pit.

They weave past the many caves that house dragons of all ages, colors, and sizes. At one point they stop to peek into Syrax’s cave as she sleeps, clouds of smoke rising from her nostrils as she breathes.

Longing for a dragon of his own fills Aemond but Senya yanks him past Syrax and further down into the depths of the pit. They then come to a complete stop at the mouth of the largest cave in all of the pit. The cave that houses the mighty Vermithor. Senya turns to him with a great smile upon her pretty face and his own widens as he shakes his head in warning as she begins to creep into the cave.

“Senya No!” He whisper shouts. “Visenya Velaryon get back out here now!” He demands, resisting the urge to stomp his foot at her but Senya only lets out a soft huff of laughter at him.

“The only way to get a dragon is to take one for myself, uncle.” she calls back out to him and she disappears from his sight. He stands outside, shifting nervously from one foot to the other, debating on whether or not he should run to the Keepers and Aegon to get them to fetch Visenya and make her stop but in the end his curiosity wins out and he waits with baited breath to see if she is successful.

He hears a song of Old Valyria echo inside the cave as Senya sings to soothe the ancient dragon who was once the mount of the Great King Jaehaerys. Smoke billows out of the tunnel and Aemond coughs as he hears the warning snarl of the dragon followed by the odd sounds a dragon makes when it ‘speaks’.

“*Jikagon* Vermithor!” *Go*, calls out the girlish voice of his niece and a rumble sounds from the mighty dragon. The ground shakes as the dragon begins to move from within his nest and Aemond quickly begins to run out of the caves so as to not get trampled by the King of the Dragons.

When Aemond comes sprinting out of the caves he gains the attention of the Dragon Keepers as well as the attention of Aegon and his nephews. Their mouths open to no doubt make some sort of terribly mean joke at his expense as they feel the ground shake but as Aemond huffs for breath he cries out.

“Vermithor! It’s Vermithor!” He cries and immediately the Dragon Keepers begin shouting in alarm while another one begins to usher them all to safety. Vermithor had not emerged from his cave in many years, preferring to sleep instead of gracing the world with his presence since his master had died.

“Visenya!” Jace cries out in panic as he is ushered away. “My sister! Where is Visenya?” Immediately more shouting breaks out as everyone begins to search for the beloved Princess in fear that she would be trampled in the path of the dragon who was now beginning to make his way out of the tunnels. Luke begins to cry, thinking his sister to be dead or at least that she soon would be while Jace screams out his sister’s name. Aegon only stands there with his mouth open in shock while he tries to drag Jace back to safety. Before Aemond can tell them exactly where Visenya is, the entrance of the tunnel explodes as it collides with the almighty strength of the Dragon. He stomps his way into the courtyard and roars to announce his awakening to all those in King’s Landing.

Second only to Vhagar the Queen of the Dragons, Vermithor was a monster of unimaginable size, dominating the entirety of the Dragonpit’s open space as he shook out his wings and stretched his giant maw open. Laughing on his back, sits Visenya looking every inch a Targaryen Princess, ready to fly away and conquer the world. She beams in victory and when she catches Aemond’s eye she waves in excitement before calling out to all of the boys to look at her and watch.

“Oh by the gods.” Jace whispers in a mix of awe, shock, and horror at the sight of Visenya atop Vermithor and Aegon lets out a low “Woah.” as he takes in the picture before them. Aemond does not speak, he only watches with his mouth open and eyes wide, not even waving back to Visenya. Then in a confident voice, Visenya cries out a word that makes everyone start forward to stop her.

“*Sōvegon Vermithor! Sōvegon !*” *Fly*. The mighty dragon shakes his head before it slowly begins to make its start to fly, his wings beginning to flap as he picks up speed while everyone watches with mixed awe and horror. Finally, Vermithor gives a mighty heave and he lifts into the sky as Visenya shrieks with laughter and triumph while the Masters of the Dragon pit call out to her to come back, attempting to call Vermithor to return. Their commands matter not anymore, for Vermithor has a new master and will no longer take orders from anyone but her.

When she comes back, breathless and windswept, high on victory and the feeling of flying she collides with Aemond in a hug, laughing against him as he lectures her, calling her insane and asking how she could be so thoughtless, so reckless. She pulls back, holding him at arms length.

“Aemond, if you want a Dragon you have to take it!” She whispers in determination and newfound confidence. “I wanted a dragon so I got myself one and now look. I ride the king of the dragons.”

Those words ring in Aemond’s mind for days.

They go back to the pit as a whole group weeks later, Visenya visiting her precious new mount and Jace practicing his commands once more as Aemond stands there again, rolling his eyes at the fact that he must sit there and bear witness to this most boring and atrocious waste of his time. It is only when Aegon tells him that they have found a dragon for him, that Aemond perks up. He wonders which dragon they have found for him and how they have done it. Afterall dragons are not just found and brought to one, you must bond with them yourself.

“How?” He warily asks his brother and Jace as Aegon only lets out that all knowing smile he wears on his face all the time.

“The gods provide.” He intones mysteriously and Jace laughs as Luke disappears to fetch the mysterious dragon. Visenya is still with Vermithor and not paying attention but he wishes she would. But then Luke appears.

On the end of a rope walks the fattest pig Aemond has ever seen and it is bedecked with cutout wings and horns and Aemond burns with fury and embarrassment at the lengths the trio will go to embarrass him and hurt his feelings as they drive him further into feeling outcast.

“Your mount!” Aegon announces with that mean tone that he masquerades as one of humor.

“We can call him the pink dread.” Jace laughs and Aemond feels tears well in his eyes. And he turns away from them, willing his tears to disappear and not fall.

“What is this?” Demands the voice of Visenya and Aemond feels a mix of anger towards her and relief as the sound of her voice takes ahold of him, she comes to stand by his side and glares at the three boys in front of her. “What have you done?” She demands an answer from Aegon who falters in the face of the fierce face of Vermithor’s rider. In the background Vermithor rumbles at the anger he feels emitting from his rider and the trio only shift in nervousness. Jace fumbles over himself to make excuses to his twin but she cuts him off. “Apologize to Aemond. The both of you! Apologize to him now!” She commands but Aemond only turns away from her, putting distance between him and her where she once stood close by his side there were now several feet between them.

“Forget it.” He mutters to her, not wanting her to defend him, despite the tiny amount of warmth in his chest as she does. At the knowledge that she takes his side, that she chooses him. “Just leave me alone.” He tells all four of them before stalking away.

He doesn’t visit her in their hidden place that night and he doesn’t tell her about how he tried to go and claim a dragon for himself as she had. He doesn’t tell her about how he tried and Dreamfyre almost burned him alive. He doesn’t tell her because all he feels is upset and abandoned. Where they once had stood together, she had now left him and had her own dragon that

she took on rides as often as she was allowed. Aegon had even taken to speaking and playing more with their niece now that she rode Vermithor. Aemond cries himself to sleep that night at his feelings of loneliness, embarrassment, abandonment, and the fact that Aemond will never be like his family.

When the entire family goes to Driftmark to bury Laena Velaryon Targaryen, his uncle Daemon's wife, a host of dragons descend on the castle and bitterness only grows in him. Caraxes, Sunfyre, Syrax, Seasmoke, Moondancer, Vermithor, and the Queen of Dragons herself- Vhagar- all land and nest at Driftmark while their riders mourn.

At the funeral for her aunt Aemond finally catches Visenya's eye and offers her an apologetic look before coming over to her and squeezing her hand while he tells her that he's sorry for her aunt's death. Visenya looks at him in shock and maybe even a bit of happiness before she squeezes his hand back and their rift is mended. They spend the funeral together until Jace comes to take her to comfort their cousins, Rhaena and Baela.

He watches her go and waves at her when she turns back to look at him one more time. In the distance Vhagar lets out a moan of pain at the loss of yet another rider and the other dragons give her answering rumbles as if they are seeking to comfort her. The more sounds that emit from the mouth of Vhagar the more curiosity grows in Aemond.

Visenya rides the King but the Queen of the Dragons is now riderless and ripe for the taking. Visenya's words ring in his mind.

"Aemond, if you want a Dragon you have to take it! I wanted a dragon so I got myself one and now look. I ride the king of the dragons."

He wants a dragon. But not just any dragon. He wants the best, he wants one that when he mounts it everyone will finally see that he isn't a joke.

That he is worthy of their time, of their love. He wants a dragon, he wants Vhagar, so that he will finally be accepted as a true Targaryen and receive the same delighted praise that Viserys gave to Visenya when she triumphantly returned to the Keep after claiming Vhagar. (Most importantly, he wants a dragon that makes him worthy of Visenya, and only Vhagar will do.)

He goes to claim Vhagar that night and after tense moments, Vhagar finally accepts him as she obeys his commands and sweeps him up into the air for his first flight ever. Aemond cries with happiness as he whoops, flying through the sky. He can't wait to tell Senya. But nothing goes as he hoped or planned. Instead of acceptance and congratulation, Aemond is met with screaming accusations and physical blows.

His nephews come with Rhaena and Baela to confront him about what they claim to be 'Dragon Theft' as if one can steal a dragon when it is a living being with an intelligent mind of its own.

"She was mine to claim!" Screeches this upset voice of, is that Rhaena? He can't tell which twin is which. He doesn't care that this girl thinks she has some claim to Vhagar.

"Then you should've claimed her when you had the chance!" He spits back at her his tone one mocking and cruel as he shoves in her face the fact that she lost out on riding her mother's dragon. By this point Visenya has appeared in the hall, summoned by all of the commotion and she lurks, confused in the background. "Maybe your cousins can find you a pig to ride. It would suit you." He has crossed smug and mocking and entered the realm of completely cruel. Visenya's mouth drops open at his words and she calls out to him.

"Aemond!" Her voice is rebuking, disappointed in him. Not at all the tone or words he wanted to hear from her when he returned victorious with a dragon to match her own. He doesn't have time to say anything back to her because one of the girls flies at him and the next thing he knows he's being hit.

Blow after blow lands on him and he feels that dragon fire that his brother often speaks of burn in him. His nephews now hit him as well and he begins to strike back, matching the four others blow for blow. Visenya cries out at all of them, commanding them to stop but none of them hear her. She tries to drag Aemond off of Jace but his elbow flies back and accidentally catches her in the eye and she lets out a shocked wail of pain.

Aemond grabs Luke by the throat and squeezes, desperate to choke the life out of him and teach him a lesson. Tears stream down Luke's face as he claws at Aemond's hand.

"You'll die screaming in flames just as your father did! Bastard!" He spits at Luke.

"My father is alive!" Luke wails back, ever a child and Aemond only lets out a vicious and mocking laugh as Visenya snarls out his name between sobs as her fury at him rises. Newfound strength rises in Jace as his beloved twin and his precious baby brother cry both from pain and the insult. Jace yanks a knife out of his belt and Senya screams out at him to put the knife down.

Aemond pushes Jace to the ground and the knife clatters out of his grip, flying away and landing in the dirt. Aemond stands over Jace with a rock in hand, like a being of Death, ready to claim his first life just as he had claimed his dragon. Before he lands the blow, two hands plant on his shoulders and throw him so roughly to the ground that all of his breath is forced out of his lungs.

Aemond tries to stand but Visenya keeps him pinned to the ground while Luke sits on his chest and hefts the knife over his head. Aemond tries to struggle for freedom and turn away but it's too late. The knife flashes down and Aemond is blinded. And from his only remaining eye all he sees is the snarling, vicious face of his once beloved Visenya.

A rift so wide and deep

Chapter Notes

I do take fic requests if yall have any!

Mounting Vhagar did not earn Aemond any fatherly pride. In fact, what the King was most concerned with was not his own son's missing eye but the massive, dark purple bruise around the eye of his only granddaughter and her nose that dripped a bit of blood. He held her chin in his hand as he turned her face to get a good look at the bruise. Aemond saw the concern and love that Father always had for Jace, Luke, and especially Visenya but never had any for his own children.

"How could you allow this to happen to her? To all of them?" He demanded, turning sharply to the commander of the Kingsguard as he pulled his beloved granddaughter into his side, cradling her close as if he would protect her with his decaying body. Aemond wanted to be furious that his father cared more for her bruise and not his missing eye, but he did feel bad that he had done that to her when all Visenya had tried to do was help. However, his anger and sense of betrayal won out because how could she help to take his eye from him and then everyone act as if she were the most wronged party here? Aemond glared sullenly at the ground. "I will have answers!" His father demands.

"The children were supposed to be asleep in bed, my king" Commander Westerling answers.

"Who had the watch?" The king asks, leaving Visenya's side to finally come look at the damage done to the face of his own son. Aemond looks up to meet his father's analytical gaze as he observes the injury, but he sees only a fraction of the concern Viserys had shown the other children.

“The young prince was attacked by his own cousins, Your Grace” Mother’s guard answers, denying any blame for the incident and Aemond scowls at the knight his mother favors so much. The knight she sometimes uses to punish her own sons.

“You swore an oath,” Viserys cries in outrage. “To protect my blood!” Ser Criston only gives a daringly flippant response.

“We never thought that we would have to protect princes from princes, Your grace.”

“That is no answer.” The king is absolutely furious at this point, no longer hovering over Visenya or Aemond, now looking back and forth between his guards as they shift blame from one person to the next and his anger only mounts. Meanwhile the maester finishes sewing the wound closed and Aemond’s mother observes with a concerned eye. He wonders if mother is concerned for him or the fact that he no longer looks perfect.

“It will heal will it not maester?” She asks and Aemond turns to fully face the maester who hesitates in his answer. His stomach sinks. He won’t heal.

“The flesh will heal; however, the eye is lost, Your Grace.” Aemond slumps back in his seat and in the corner of his remaining eye he sees Visenya’s hands come up to cover her mouth in shock and horror while Luke’s is covered with guilt. Immediately Aemond’s mother turns on Aegon, desperately seeking vengeance and an outlet for her rage. She grabs his arm and Aegon winces, already prepared for the abuse.

“Where were you?” She spits at him, but Aegon is too lost in his cups to see just how deeply their mother is angered. He knows to expect her verbal abuse but he is still caught off guard by her accusations and her sharp nails that dig into his arms.

“Me?” He asks, voice incredulous and eyebrows raised as he points to himself with a look of drunken shock. An animalistic baring of teeth appears in their mother’s face and as quick as a flash her hand raises, coming down across the cheek of Aegon. Aemond silently thanks any god who is listening that they had made Aegon the ever-present target of their

mother's constant rage and not him. "What was that for?" Aegon wails out, clutching his cheek. Aemond doesn't even feel bad for him.

"That was nothing compared to the abuse that your brother suffered while you were drowning in your cups, you fool." Aegon turns to Aemond and for the first time it seems like he's fully taking in the damage done to Aemond's face. An almost proud smirk appears on the corner of Aegon's mouth- one that is mirrored on Aemond's face- before it disappears, quick so their mother does not see.

"What is the meaning of this?" Comes the loud shout of Lord Coryls as he descends from the steps with the Princess Rhaenys behind him while she desperately calls her 5 grandchildren to come to her. The five children quickly surround their grandparents and the elder couple take inventory of the injuries. The two curl around the children like two protective dragons guarding their eggs and Aemond wants to scoff at the ridiculousness of it (and a bit out of jealousy).

"What happened?" Rhaenys whispers in horror as she takes in the sight of her three granddaughters, bloody and bruised, while Luke covers his nose and cries and Jace nurses a wound on the back of his head. Aemond watches Visenya wince when her grandmother brushes her bruised eye and the feelings of guilt pang in his stomach again. He should have been more careful, he thinks. Maybe if he had not hit her then she would not have helped Luke take his eye, maybe she would have sided with him. However, none of the children have even a second to answer Rhaenys' question because the door of the main hall slams open and The Crown Princess Rhaenyra storms in with Uncle Daemon following quickly behind.

"Jace? Luke! Visenya!" Rhaenyra cries out and she quickly kneels down before her middle son, cooing softly at him. The children of Alicent Hightower watch with bitterness and secret longing at the loving parental picture of family that stands before them. "Show me. Show me." She commands softly and Luke removes his hand from his terribly broken nose and cries harder. "My precious children," she exhales. "Who did this to you?"

Did this to them? Aemond almost wants to laugh at the anger he feels. Why is everyone so concerned for the other children? Why does no one seem to care about his much more serious injury? But he remembers, he is Aemond the unwanted, Aemond the unchosen and he will always be less important in the eyes of his family. But he cannot stand this slight and so he cries out his frustration.

“They attacked me!” He snarls, turning an accusing finger on the twin girls.

“He attacked Baela!”

“He broke Luke’s nose!”

“He stole mother’s dragon!”

“He hit Visenya!”

All of the children begin to scream at one another as they all try to explain their side of the story to the adults and the room descends into chaos. Aegon begins to laugh his insane laugh in his corner. Uncle Daemon watches from the side of the room, ever observing (he had already checked on his own girls and when he had seen only a few bruises he had gone to watch from the sidelines).

“He was gonna kill Jace!” Luke wails out and Aemond rolls his eye at that.

“I didn’t do anything!” He denies because after all, technically he never did it because they interrupted him. There is no way to prove that death was actually his intention. Mother comes to his side, putting her hand on his shoulder as she stands against the other children, pulling herself tall with righteous fury.

“It is my son who should be telling the tale!” She bites out and Aemond’s half-sister goes to spit something back.

“SILENCE!” Rings out the voice of the king and everyone falls quiet immediately, everyone except little fucking Luke who whispers up to his

mother.

“He called us bastards.” *Fucking Luke*, Aemond grits his teeth. Why couldn’t the baby just keep it to himself instead of saying something that was going to earn Aemond a beating from his mother for having a big mouth. Father turns to him, approaching him with a softer, yet commanding voice.

“Aemond...I will have the truth of what happened.” Aemond hesitates, not wanting to get in any trouble but his father’s gaze hardens. “Now!” The king demands. Mother’s mouth falls open in her shock at the words of the king and she speaks with incredulousness.

“What else is there to hear?” She gasps out. “*Your* son has been maimed and her son is to blame!” Mother emphasizes the ‘your’ when she says your son and Aemond privately thinks that won’t do anything to help his case, after all father hardly cares for any of his children beyond Rhaenyra. His half-sister moves, pulling her three children behind her, making herself their protective shield.

“It was a regrettable accident.” She claims, her voice low and soft as she answers his mother.

“Accident?” The Queen only gapes at the audacity of the Princess as she turns to the King once more. “The Prince Lucerys brought a blade to the ambush. He meant to kill my son!” Her tone now borders on begging. Aemond decides it’s best not to earn her ire by contradicting her and saying that Jace was actually the one who brought it. (Aemond also keeps the knowledge that Visenya is the one who dragged him down in the first place, making it possible for Luke to land the blow, to himself. Even now as he burns with fiery anger towards her, he protects her because he knows his mother is a vengeful creature).

“It was my sons who were attacked and forced to defend themselves. Vile insults were levied against them.” Rhaenyra claims, her voice low and strong as the voice of Aemond’s mother only grows higher pitched and more unstable. Father turns in confusion to behold his eldest child.

What insults?" He asks and the room holds its breath. For if the Princess answers truthfully, this will be the first time she would have ever addressed the rumors about the legitimacy of her children. She hesitates and everyone leans forward before she clears her throat and barrels on with determination.

"The legitimacy of my children's birth was put loudly to question." Her tone is one of unfailing outrage as she announces this and the King looks around, taken aback.

"What?" He asks in that gravelly, low voice of his.

"He called us bastards." Luke cries out again from behind his mother's skirt and this time Aemond has had enough. He scoffs at the little boy.

"Not all of you. Just you. And the newest baby too." He sneers out and his mother's hand on his shoulder tightens so much he wants to yelp in pain. His sister goes on to accuse him of treason and Aemond's mother backs away from him as if her fury with the Princess has forced her back physically. The king only demands answers and Aemond's gaze shifts quickly to his mother before snapping his gaze away. To shift attention the Queen demands to know where Prince Laenor is, but his voice calls out from the top of the stairs.

"I am here!" He quickly stomps his way down the steps and makes his way towards his wife and children.

"Papa!" Cries Visenya and her brothers quickly echo the statement as they flee to seek comfort in the embrace of their father. He gathers them all into his arms, examining them and outrage appears on his features.

"What has happened? Who has dared to lay a hand on my children?" Visenya begins to rapidly whisper the story to her father who straightens up at the end of it and meets Aemond's gaze with one of disgust and what looks to be pride for his own children at permanently scarring their rival. "My son's births are being put to question? Is it not enough that the young Prince took Vhagar without consideration for my grieving nieces and late sister or that he landed harsh blows on the bodies of not only the boys but

of the young Princesses too?” Prince Laenor has enough outrage and righteous fury to match Aemond’s mother as he brings his children with him as he walks to stand by his wife’s side.

They form quite the united picture. Rhaenys and Coryls stand behind them with Rhaena and Baela clutched in their grasps while Rhaenyra and her husband stand tall and proud, protecting their litter of children. The king nods at Laenor’s words and turns back to Aemond once more demanding answers. Answers Aemond cannot tell the truth of because he truly fears the swift hand of his mother, of his grandfather, and of Criston Cole. He takes the safest option instead.

“It was Aegon.” He claims and Aegon gives a start.

“Me?” He asks again, still confused. But when Aemond gives him a look that screams ‘you better side with me’ Aegon begins to quickly stumble over his words. “Everyone knows it, Father. Look at the twins and then look at Luke and Joffrey. The difference between them is plain for everyone to see.” Everyone turns to behold the twins and Luke. Luke’s plain features, his brown hair and light olive skin tone and pug nose contrast greatly with the regal features of his Valyrian sister and Valyrian-Baratheon brother. The only Valyrian feature Luke has is purple eyes but even they look ordinary as they pair with his Strong looks.

Everyone waits with bated breath to hear the King’s answer to this attack from Aegon’s mouth, but he makes a plea for the fighting to stop instead, commanding them to come together at once. But despite his words no one actually attempts to make any overture of peace.

Mother makes a cry for justice, demanding Luke’s eye and Aemond wants it desperately. He so badly wants to see Lucerys as deeply and horribly scarred as he is. He wants Luke to wail with true pain, not the sniffles of a broken nose but the nauseating horror as you realize that something so essential has been taken from your grasp for the rest of your life. Mother commands Cole to bring her Luke’s eye and Rhaenyra shoves her son further behind her, Laenor now keeping the boy securely protected between him and Lord Coryls. Visenya comes to stand in front of her brother as a shield as well and Aemond wants to cry at her for the unfairness of it.

How can she defend Luke so willfully at the mere thought of losing an eye but so easily pin him down and snarl with viciousness as his own is cut out. She was supposed to side with him, she was supposed to pick him. Visenya was the only one he had ever counted on to have his back, to be by his side and yet for the second time in this one night, she turns and betrays him for the same boys who once tormented him day after day.

Then the room falls to screams and chaos once more. It all happens so fast, his father demanding that Luke and Joffrey's births never be questioned again and then Aemond's mother is stealing and unsheathing the knife the King keeps so close as she charges towards Rhaenyra and Lucerys, hungry for blood.

Rhaenyra grabs his mother's arms in mid air, stopping her as they come to a cross in the center of the room, everyone stumbling out of their way. The commander of the Kingsguard is screaming at Ser Criston who screams for the Queen as he charges towards Aemond's niece and nephews.

"Visenya!" He cries out in warning for even though he is so furious with her, he knows that the pain Ser Criston can bring upon her is one so great that he could never wish on her, he knows his mother's knight will claim vengeance on any of Rhaenyra's children if he gets ahold of one of them. Uncle Daemon intercepts Ser Criston, halting him and saving Visenya from the possibility of harm while Ser Laenor strains against the Kingsguard, trying desperately to reach his wife and bring her to safety from the insanity of Aemond's mother.

In the center of the room the two women push at one another, one desperate to protect and one desperate for just an ounce of freedom, of control, of vengeance. It is almost as if he is watching a horrid mockery of dragons fighting but instead of fearsome dragons it is two women who hate where there was once love.

"You go too far." Rhaenyra murmurs to the Queen, her words stilted as if every second of this pains her. Alicent Hightower only descends further into her wildness, raging at the Princess, begging Rhaenyra as to when she has ever sacrificed as much as the Queen has.

“Where is duty? Where is Honor? Where is sacrifice?” His mother cries as everyone screams at her to free the Princess. “And now you take my son’s eye, to even that you feel entitled!” Aemond now sees that he plays only a small role in his mother’s fury. He is but a small amount of what pains her so, only another mark of the crimes that Rhaenyra has committed in his mother's mind. She only uses him as an excuse to finally lash out for what she feels she is owed.

“Exhausting, wasn’t it?” Whispers his half-sister. “Hiding beneath the cloak of your own righteousness.” Her words cut visibly deep, and the Queen lets out a gasping sob. “But now they see you as you are.” Rhaenyra declares, a tear running down her cheek.

Behind his half-sister, Aemond’s eye rises to meet the gaze of Visenya, violet clashing with indigo as they behold one another, both their eyes glistening with tears. 'Now they see you as you are.' Does she see Aemond as less than? Is this why she rebuked him so? Does she feel this hate that their mothers feel for one another? Does she finally see him as everyone else does and is casting him aside in favor of a new family? Visenya only gazes at him with a pained look and his own facial expressions beg her for answers, beg her to come over to him, to place her hand over his as she once would have and to tell him that she still chooses him.

But the blade comes down and fabric is cut, blood is drawn, and a rift is forever torn. The two sides of the room stand against each other and as the precious blood of Princess Rhaenyra drips to the floor lifelessly, so too does the friendship slowly drain away from the once inseparable Aemond and Visenya.

“Do not mourn me” Aemond speaks, his words directed to his mother and yet his gaze never leaving that of Visenya’s. “It was a fair exchange. I may have lost an eye, but I gained a dragon.” He now speaks directly to Visenya and as the room begins to empty, he keeps his gaze on her, holding on to the last dregs of hope that she will come to him. Visenya gazes back, pain written all over her.

Their gazes are torn apart when Uncle Daemon comes between them.

3 days later the body of Laenor Velayron is pulled out of the hearth of the Great Hall of Driftmark, burned and beaten to the point that he is unrecognizable. Guards come yelling into Princess Rhaenyra's quarters, waking her abruptly, telling her to come quickly as her husband had been attacked.

Rhaenyra had quickly fetched her godmother before racing downstairs to see the body of her husband being dragged out of the fire and placed on the floor. The Princess lets out a horrified scream and begins to run over to her husband's body, but she is held back by her Kingsguard who is afraid to let her be burned by the still smoldering body. Rhaenys clings to her granddaughter and they sob together, slowly collapsing on the floor as they behold the wretched sight in front of them. Rhaenyra wails her pain like a mighty dragon as she mourns the father of her children and her best friend.

Eventually she breaks free from her godmother and Kingsguard and crawls her way across the floor to Laenor's body and she pulls him into her lap, disregarding the smoldering embers that still burn across him and paying no mind to the ruin she brings on her nightshift.

"Rhaenyra." Someone grabs her shoulder and tries to pull her back, but she fiercely shakes them off and continues to rock her husband's body back and forth as she cries. "Rhaenyra!" The voice calls again, growing more worried and she only shakes her head.

"By the gods." She hears someone gasp in horror and she watches through her tears as her father and Alicent come to stand before her and take in the sight. Despite everything that has happened, Alicent's face holds small threads of pity, and her own eyes are wide with horror and tears. Her father struggles to crouch down, but he does, and he places his hand on her shoulder.

“My daughter,” he rasps. “My precious girl, I am so sorry.” He murmurs but Rhaenyra is not comforted by even the loving presence of her beloved father.

“Laenor.” She sobs out and Rhaenys is by her side, wailing over the body as well. “My husband! My husband!” She cries out and someone sobs in the background. The strong hands grip her shoulders again and give a gentle tug and a mouth presses to her ear and whispers to her.

“Rhaenyra. Rhaenyra!” The voice is full of worry and pain and her head lolls to the side and there crouches Daemon. His eyes are mournful as he takes in her appearance and his hands move from her shoulders to cup her face as he presses a kiss to her forehead and pulls her to his chest, hugging her fiercely. “My poor niece.” He murmurs and Viserys shakes his head sadly before giving his brother a grateful look. Rhaenys falls into Viserys’ chest, seeking comfort in the cousin she was once so close to and he stands with her in his arm, patting her comfortingly on the back.

“I am so sorry Princesses.” Alicent says, her tone mournful and she grasps her 7-pointed star pendant in her hand. Rhaenys and Rhaenyra do not take any comfort in her words, distress still racking their bodies.

“What of my children?” Rhaenyra cries out for all the hall to hear. “What am I to tell my children? Someone has murdered my husband! My children’s father! I demand justice! I demand answers!” Her tone is fierce and crazed now, her face is one of accusation as she breaks out of Daemon’s grasp and stands, pointing her finger accusingly around the hall. Everyone shrinks back from the visceral anger of the Crown Princess.

“It was some knight who was close to your husband, your highness.” A guard answers reluctantly after a few moments. His voice is nervous and quiet, and he flinches back when she rounds on him, burning with ferocity but he manages to continue. “I came into the hall when I heard the sounds of someone screaming and I saw the knight stripping the Prince’s pendant from his neck as he burned in the fire. He then held it aloft to me and bragged that he had killed my Prince before he stole away from the hall. I was unable to catch him, my princess. I was not fast enough.” He knelt at her feet and bowed his head. “I beg your forgiveness for my failures.”

Rhaenyra is spitting with fury, and she refuses his apology, denying him absolution.

“You will tell my children, the Prince’s children, of your failure and you will beg their forgiveness. For today you have taken their father from them.” Angry tears course down her cheeks and Rhaenys goes to her, taking her hand and pulling her into her side. The two women form a united front of grieving, unaccepting of the knight’s failure and they share their pain together while everyone watches the powerful scene before them. Rhaenyra turns to her goodmother and speaks in a shaky voice to her. “I must go get the children. Can you stay here with him, with the body?” Rhaenys gives a nod and squeezes her hand before letting her go.

Visenya and Jace often sleep in the same room. As twins they shared a womb and so they often found comfort in close quarters, especially now as Visenya mourned the loss of her closest friend and confidant. They lay in separate beds that they had pushed together so they could whisper to each other when they were supposed to be asleep. However, they were fast asleep when their mother came in, peacefully unaware despite all the screaming and chaos around them.

“Jace.” Their mother whispers, softly shaking him awake before turning to do the same to her daughter. “I,” Mother’s voice breaks and she takes a shaky breath. “You must come quickly my loves.” She helps them pull robes on over their nightclothes and they hurry to fetch Luke from the room next to their own.

They quickly hurry down the spiral stairs, down into the reception hall. There is a frantic bustle as a group of people hurry to stand in front of something lying on the ground, clearly hiding whatever it is from their view.

“Mother?” Visenya asks, her voice wary and she looks up at her mother with her eyebrows furrowed. Their mother smooths Visenya’s curls back and presses a kiss to her forehead.

“My darlings.” Their grandmother cries out, rushing to them and gathering them into a fierce hug, and she presses them close. “I am so sorry, my

dears.” She whispers into their hair as she hugs them. When she pulls back confusion paints the faces of the three royal children. They take in the somber faces that grace everyone in the room and the tears that trail down the faces of several people. They see their grandfather Coryls crouching on the ground behind the people who stand as a wall.

“What’s going on mama?” Jace asks and their mother lets out a wet sob before she presses a hand to her mouth and closes her eyes. When they open, she removes her hand and crouches down to their level, pressing her hands to the cheeks of Jace and Luke after she brushes her fingers through Visenya’s hair.

“Your father, he-” She breaks off and takes a steeling breath and Visenya’s eyes go wide, and she begins to rapidly shake her head in denial. “Your father was murdered a little while ago. I am so sorry my loves.” All three children begin to cry, and Luke’s purple eyes brim with tears as he begins to cry out for their papa. “Your father loved you very much.” Mother declares fiercely. “He loved you more than you could ever know, and I swear to you that I will find who is responsible for this.”

Visenya does not hear the rest of her mother’s words, nor does she feel the hug that follows. She breaks away from the hug and begins to wander to where the people stand in her way. One of them begins to warn her away but she pays him no mind and passes by him.

There lies the burned body of her father and pearly tears begin to drip from her eyes and her hands come up to cover her mouth. Grandfather Coryls pulls her to his side where he kneels and offers her comfort. Her kingly grandfather slowly hobbles over to her, patting her on her shoulder and giving condolences before going to see her brothers and mother. Some knight who kneels on the ground begins to stammer out apologies and Jace begins to shout fiercely at him but it is all just white noise in Visenya’s head.

Her father is dead. The man who took her for rides on Seasmoke, who taught her how to fight with swords and daggers, who braided her curls and told her fantastical stories every night. The loving papa who stole treats from the kitchens and snuck them to her and Jace during their lessons and

who was always there to wipe her tears and give her comfort. Who would do that now? She still had her mother, but Visenya needed a father too. Who else was going to do all those things for her? Who was going to kneel before her and promise to be her guardian for the rest of her life?

“Papa,” She breathes out and falls to her knees before the body, reaching out to grasp one of the burnt fingers and crying harder when she felt that they were nothing like the soft hands that brushed her hair.

The next day the body lies in its coffin and is ready to be pushed out to the sea where he will join Aunt Laena. Seasmoke lets out low moans, not the roars Vhagar had loosed but still clear mourning sounds. When Jace and Visenya visit him before the funeral he lets them come up and stroke his silver blue scales and bends his neck so that they are protected from the views of others by his body. The dragon feels his master's blood in their veins.

They all stand there and Grandfather Corlys gives the order. The men begin to heave the ropes and the coffin slides closer and closer to the sea and as Vaemond gives the final words of Eulogy the coffin falls and Jace flinches as it crashes into the sea. By now the Princess's face is one of stone, hard and emotionless as she watches her husband disappear from her and their children forever. Jace and Visenya do not cry as the body sinks but Luke does. He has not stopped crying since he heard the news. Grandmother's hands rest on Visenya's shoulders and Visenya looks up at her for a brief moment of comfort.

Her gaze then flicks over to Aemond who stands off to the side with his mother and siblings and she sees his own violet gaze piercing through her as he watches her every move. He looks like he wants to say something but Visenya cannot stand to hear his voice. All she can think of is how Aemond is a thoughtless and careless boy who ruined Aunt Laena's funeral by claiming Vhagar. Visenya dreads to think of what her awful uncle will do to

ruin this one. He's already taken Vhagar, hit her and her cousins as well as strangled Luke and landed a horrible blow to Jace's head, she wants nothing more to do with him and the pain he brings with him.

Her uncle Daemon steals her attention when he pulls her in for a gentle hug and she falls into his strong arms, finding that fatherly comfort she craves.

"I am so sorry my dear girl." He whispers to her, shielding her from everyone and she finally cries into his arms.

At the wake Visenya stands looking over the sea and she prays to the Gods of Old Valyria just as her mother and father do, or did. She prays to the gods that her father would be given peace and she begs them to fill the aching pain of the hole in her chest where the love of her father once resided.

"Senya?" A timid voice calls out and Visenya spins around with a hateful expression on her face as she meets the gaze of Aemond.

"Don't call me that." She spits and he takes a step back in shock and the vitriol in her tone. "Don't speak to me." Her voice is rising in pitch and a few people begin to look over.

"Visenya, I-" He tries again but she shakes her head and jabs a finger at his chest.

"No! I don't want to hear anything you could say! I don't want you anywhere near me! All you do is cause me and my family pain! You ruined Aunt Laena's funeral do you want to ruin my father's now too?" Her hysterical tone has now gathered the attention of everyone and her mother, grandmother, grandfathers, and Jace all begin to rush over to calm her and halt whatever altercation may happen.

"Visenya, come my dear," Grandmother pleads when she reaches Visenya first, she stands to Visenya's left and calls to her, but Visenya ignores her in favor of maintaining a hateful glare at her uncle. Her grandfathers and mother call to her now as well but she pays them no mind. Her words had

sparked anger in Aemond's eye for now his body was tense and he returned her glare with a spiteful one of his own.

"Vis?" Jace calls and her gaze flickers to her brother who stands behind Aemond with his hand stretched out towards her, beckoning his precious twin to come to him. Her eyes go back and forth from Aemond to Jace for a moment and then she chooses.

She slams her shoulder into Aemond's as she storms past him, and she takes her brother's hand. Visenya chooses Jace, she chooses Jace and her brothers over Aemond when her entire life she has only ever chosen Aemond. She can see the moment of realization come over Aemond when he realizes the significance of this before his eye narrows into a look of pure hate.

'Now I see you as you truly are!' Visenya thinks as she glares balefully at Aemond. For these past days and their events have revealed Aemond's true nature to her. He is not the boy she had thought he was; he is not the caring and playful boy who was always gentle with her. No, he is a jealous and spiteful creature who cares not for the feelings of others or the effects of his actions on them. She turns her back on him and walks away, hand in hand with Jace.

'Now I see you as you truly are.' Aemond spits in his mind at Visenya. Now he sees Visenya for who she is. She has abandoned him and chosen another, she has turned her back on him and denies his companionship in favor of those who had tormented him endlessly. First the incident with his eye and now this. All she has done is spit in his face and abandon him. She willfully ignores his pain and his motivations and sides with anyone but him. And so Aemond wipes the tear on his face and makes a promise to himself that from this moment and forever his heart will never hurt for or beat for Visenya Velaryon again. He will never love her or cry for her from this day, until his last.

The Bonds of Family

Chapter Notes

The show writers really failed to show us the family after Daemon and Rhaenyra married and that had to be fixed.

So, I present to you the final moments of joy and peace before it all goes to shit.

The entire Royal family remains in Driftmark for another week to help Rhaenyra and her children grieve the sudden loss. Rhaenyra remains locked away in the wing that housed her, Laenor, and their children and she receives no guests but her father, her goodmother and father, and Daemon. She wears only black, her hair remains down and unadorned with mourning. She spends the days with her children, comforting them and trying her utmost best to keep their minds from the horrible events and help them accept the loss of their father. At nights she and Rhaenys commiserate and share stories of Laenor- ones that make them smile, laugh, cry.

Despite everything, even the Queen sends Rhaenyra a message, offering condolences and extending the proverbial helping hand, promising to ensure that no one but the family bothers her. (Rhaenyra burns the letter for it pains her so. She has lost both of her best friends, Alicent and now Laenor. She longs for the days where she could have cried in Alicent's arms for hours).

Viserys spends many hours with his beloved grandchildren, savoring these few moments that he will have with them before they fly off to Dragonstone and he returns to be shuttered behind the giant red walls of the Keep. He holds Joffrey and laughs softly as the boy gums at his fingers and tugs on his necklace. He tells Jace and Luke stories of his time flying on the back of the great Black Dread and they ooh and ahh in all of the right places, telling him they can't wait until their dragons are big enough so that they can fly to

the Red Keep to visit him. He tells them he would be happy to see them anytime. (He tries his best to give them fatherly love but he knows that he is not enough.) It is poor Visenya who he spends the most time with however. In the safety of her chambers she cries often. Her tears stop however, when he begins to regale her with stories of Laenor, Laena, and Rhaenyra during their childhood and all of the chaos they used to wreck on the Red Keep.

It is when the week comes to a close and Rhaenyra's father takes his party and leaves that the somber setting truly takes a hold of them. There is no longer any distraction, any way of avoidance. It is just the families of Laena and Laenor that are left and grief fills Driftmark.

Daemon spends many of his nights alone and outside, finding solace in the dark. He has so many thoughts coursing through his mind and so he often seeks the comfort that can be found in the silence of the night sky with only the sounds of the Dragons to haunt his thoughts. It is a few days after the Royal party departs that his peace is disrupted by a sniffing girl.

“What are you doing out of bed?” Daemon asks Visenya when she comes wandering out onto the battlements where he is sitting.

“I cannot sleep.” She whispers out. Her curls have gone wild, her face is blotchy and red, and her eyes remain swollen. Daemon gestures for her to come to him and she slowly makes her way to him. He takes the blanket he has strewn over him, and he wraps it around the girl.

“Why can you not sleep? Do you have nightmares?” He is the picture of concern as he speaks to her with a soft voice. Daemon is the father of two daughters, and he has spent many nights since Laena died comforting his daughters to sleep when Rhaenyra cannot.

“No, that's not it, although I do have nightmares. The problem is that I cannot seem to even come close to actually sleeping.” She tugs the blanket

tighter around her. “My papa-” her voice catches and Daemon wraps an arm around her, his chest tight at the sight of this young girl who looks so much like his grandmother and like his precious Rhaenyra being so close to tears. After a few moments she gathers the strength to continue. “My papa used to put me to bed every night. He would braid my hair back and then tuck me into bed. Then he would check the room for any bad things, and he would promise me that he would be my sworn sword and defend me through the night.” A tear makes its way down her cheek, and she wipes it with the blanket. “It sounds so stupid, but it made me feel so safe and happy. And now- and now-” she stutters before dissolving into sobs again and Daemon pulls her into his arms, fully embracing her as if he could shield this tiny girl from all the pain in the world and he remembers that for all her grace and poise, she is just a girl of seven.

Eventually her tears begin to subside and so he picks her up and brings her to her mother’s chambers. Rhaenyra flies into a panic at the sight of her daughter. She hovers as Daemon sets the girl down on Rhaenyra’s bed.

“Is she alright?” Rhaenyra demands, her voice tremulous as she asks this, fearing something could be wrong with her only daughter when she has just lost her husband.

“She just misses her father dearly. Children always feel the loss more keenly than any of us.” Daemon tells her and he takes Rhaenyra’s hand in his own, preparing to say something when the bed shifts and that small voice calls out.

“Mother? Uncle Daemon?” Immediately their gazes snap to the girl and Rhaenyra goes to sit on the edge of the bed, Daemon following close with Rhaenyra’s hand still in his own. He watches as Rhaenyra brushes Visenya’s curls away from her eyes and gives the girl a fond, yet sad smile. Remembering the young girl’s words, Daemon drops Rhaenyra’s hand and goes to fetch a hairbrush from her table. He then pulls Visenya up into a seated position and turns her around. Slowly, he begins to brush her hair while telling her a story of Old Valyria, the ancient mother tongue sliding off his lips seamlessly.

Rhaenyra sits there, just as entranced as her daughter, watching as Daemon sets the hairbrush down and as his fingers begin to deftly braid her hair. He then tucks her into bed, and begins to walk around the room, peaking around the curtains, making a show of looking under the bed and Visenya lets out a small giggle.

Daemon hides his proud smile at the knowledge that he has made the girl laugh for the first time in over a week and he hears Rhaenyra laugh with her daughter now that she has caught on to what he is doing. Daemon then comes and gets down on one knee before Visenya and makes a great show, as if he were swearing fealty to her and her eyes shine with delight.

“Oh, beloved Princess, I come before you to swear my sword to your service.” Rhaenyra makes a small noise, and he sees her beaming out of the corner of his eyes and he feels love shining from her. “I shall stand watch for you and ensure that no wicked beings come to disturb your rest!” He declares, pressing his hand to his chest and bowing his head solemnly and hiding his grin. He feels a tap on his shoulder and looks up to see little Visenya smiling at him.

“Thank you, kind Ser.” She gives him a most gracious nod and Daemon rises. Rhaenyra presses a kiss to her daughter’s forehead before rising and walking Daemon to the door. Before he exits, she grabs his hand and halts him.

“Thank you, Daemon.” She whispers to him and leans up to press a kiss to his cheek. He squeezes her hand in return and gives her a kiss on her cheek as well. He opens the door to go and when he turns back to say goodnight to the young Princess, he sees her fast asleep in bed.

In the days following Daemon and Rhaenyra watch as all of their children come together and form a bond so close and special. Rhaena and Visenya become especially close and Daemon calls them Rhaenys and Visenya

come again and the girls only giggle and fall over themselves blushing. He is delighted to see that Visenya, who rides one of the largest dragons, does not discriminate against his daughter for not having a dragon of her own.

Rhaenyra takes in Baela and Rhaena, she listens to their cries and wipes their tears. She tells them stories of their father and she helps them pick pretty dresses everyday. It is not long before they find themselves sleeping in Rhaenyra's rooms with her and Visenya.

Daemon takes the boys, he takes Jace out on Dragon back, he teaches Luke sword form, and he holds baby Joffrey tight in his arms and introduces the babe to the dragons- telling Joff of their family, of Laenor, and of his destiny to one day ride a dragon of his own. Jace and Luke sit by him at dinner and he does his best to be what they need.

The second week since Laenor's death comes to a close and with it comes Rhaenys, a bearer of ominous news, to press an issue that Rhaenyra dreads to hear.

“Rhaenyra-”

“No!” Rhaenyra cries, shaking her head in denial as she tries to flee her goodmother’s words.

“Rhaenyra, please.” Rhaenys tries again, fisting her hands together in her black mourning dress as she begs Rhaenyra to see reason.

“No! I won’t listen to this! What would my children think of me? What would the people think of me?” She exclaims from the other side of the room as she rakes her hands through her silvery hair in frustration.

“They would see you doing what had to be done to protect yourself and your family.” Rhaenys stood and strode over to her gooddaughter- no, with

her children gone, Rhaenyra was truly her daughter now- and took the Princess's hands into her own. "My darling daughter," Rhaenys begins, love and sadness coming through her voice. "My son was a good man, a good husband, and an even better father. He loved you and the children so very much and he was willing to do anything to protect all of you. My son was ready to bring bloodshed and war to the Seven Kingdoms and to the Hightowers if it meant protecting your claim and that of his children."

"I know." Rhaenyra agrees fiercely. "And I cannot sully the memory of my closest friend and confidante, my children's father, by taking another husband so quickly." But Rhaenys moves her hands out of Rhaenyra's and goes to grip her daughter's arms with surprising strength and ferocity.

"Rhaenyra!" She snaps, desperate for her daughter to see that Laenor's life could not have meant naught and that her son's children will one day sit the Thrones that he fought so hard to keep for them. Her son's memory has to live on, it must. "With Laenor gone there is no one here to protect the claims of his children or your own claim at that. Coryls and I can only do so much, but we need more Rhaenyra. You need someone who can bathe the kingdoms in blood for your claims as Laenor would have." Rhaenyra slowly begins to nod her head.

She begins to see through her debilitating grief and logic starts to take over. Her husband had fought so fiercely for her through the years, at one point after Luke's birth he had slain many detractors who thought to slander Luke and speculate on his parentage.

"Where do I find a man that is willing to do any of this?" She whispers and Rhaenys just shakes her head sadly.

"Don't you worry about that, I will find some for you, my dear. You just focus on gathering yourself and the children and readying yourself for the fight we will have against the Greens now that Laenor is not here to claim his children to their faces anymore."

Rhaenys leaves the room soon after and she comes across Daemon in the hall. Her eyes lift to meet the fierce gaze of her younger cousin that she was once so inseparable from. He meets her gaze fearlessly and nods his head in the direction of Rhaenyra's chambers.

"How is she?" It is framed as a question but it is not, it is a demand. Rhaenys is flooded with memories. Memories of Daemon taking his sword to those who had mocked the young princess when she was named heir, the Daemon who had loved Rhaenyra so fiercely that it was so palpable to anyone who just so happened to catch a miniscule moment between the pair. A terrible, horrible, and incredibly clever plan flies through Rhaenys's mind.

"She is alright. But she will not be if we do not find a solution quickly." Daemon's eyebrows quirk and Rhaenys gives him a look. "She needs a husband, cousin. She needs a husband who will put all those who deny her to the sword. She needs a husband who will protect her children just as fiercely as a dragon does its clutch. We will be in danger. The Greens gain power as the King fades away and we must strengthen ourselves." Hunger bursts to life in Daemon's eyes and she knows that he is so deeply considering storming Rhaenyra's room and stealing her away but he still looks at her warily as he takes in her fierce words.

"They will say that I killed Laenor so that I could take Rhaenyra to wife." A statement of fact that they both know will happen. Tongues are quick to gossip when it comes to the Rogue Prince and the Realm's Delight.

"And did you?" Rhaenys asks, fearlessly boring her gaze into his own, demanding the truth and Daemon only shakes his head.

"I loved Laena and she loved Laenor. I love Rhaenyra and she loved Laenor. But most importantly, he was your son, cousin and I would never kill my kin- your son. I could not kill someone you all loved so dearly." And she knows it because despite what everyone thinks, Rhaenys knows that her baby cousin has a heart and that he loves deeply and ferociously.

He would never hurt those who reside so close to his heart. She steps close to her cousin and speaks in a low voice for his ears alone.

“Then go and take what you have always wanted. Take Rhaenyra as yours. Those rumors could serve you and her well in the future. They could come to fear what else the Rogue Prince will do to have and protect his love.” Daemon's breath catches and he looks at her with an expression of hunger and longing as well as surprise as she seemingly gives him permission to steal her daughter, her son's widow. Rhaenys steps away from him and continues her walk down the hall, confident that she has just brought a savior for her grandchildren and daughter.

It takes Daemon three more days to speak of it to Rhaenyra and the entire time Rhaenys's eyes follow him, watching him knowingly. It is only when Rhaenyra brings up possible suitors at dinner one evening that Daemon steels himself, determined to ask her that very night.

Rhaenyra speaks of marrying a Stark or one of the Tyrell brothers in order to secure the Reach away from the Hightowers and he grits his teeth at every word. He clenches his silverware in his fists and his teeth grind together at every name that Rhaenyra brings up.

Visenya, Jace, and Luke all scowl at the idea of a Stark or Tyrell stepfather and he wishes he could tell them that they will not have to worry about the possibility of an outsider trying to be their father.

(Part of him worries about if they will accept him or not but he recalls his moment with Visenya that one night and his moments in the training yard with the boys and he finds himself confident that they will take him as their father.)

“A Stark would make a good father and husband.” Rhaenys agrees, nodding sagely, her eyes never leaving Daemon's. “They are a pack and a Stark

would welcome your children to his pack and defend them fiercely as a wolf does his cubs.” Daemon scowls fiercely at his cousin wishing he could snarl at her to shut her mouth and stop putting ideas in Rhaenyra’s head. Rhaenyra and her children are dragons not cubs. They belong with another dragon, not a wolf. Rhaenys’s lips only curl into a knowing smirk and Daemon stabs his meat with ferocity and looks away.

“Starks are frigid.” He mutters sullenly and Coryls gives him an odd look.

“Starks come with an army and massive resources.” Rhaenyra counters and Jace’s frown only deepens.

Dinner is a stiff affair after that and when Rhaenyra broaches the topic of a marriage with the recently widowed Jason Lannister for his army and money Daemon wants to tear his hair out and scream that no Lannister, Tyrell, or even Stark can have her. She is his to love and to marry. But he does not and so he only storms out of the Dinner hall.

It is late in the night when Daemon stalks through the corridors, a lord tries to get his attention and Daemon only snarls ‘not now!’ at him as he comes closer to Rhaenyra’s chambers. He is a prowling beast, a snarling dragon who has been hunting for and now who has found his mate after so long and he will not be denied her any longer. The rider of the Blood Wyrms burns with need as he comes to stand before the doors of Rhaenyra’s room, and he takes a breath to calm himself. For all that he is a dragon, he will not barge in and scare his mate, his most beloved. He knocks gently on the door.

“Come in.” The soft voice of his beloved calls and his chest warms at the sound of her voice. He pushes the door open, turning to swiftly shut and lock it behind him so that they will not be disturbed. “Daemon?”

Rhaenyra’s voice is soft as she speaks. He turns and drinks in her appearance. She is still dressed in full black, and her hair still remains down, but for the first time she wears a small crown in it- her mourning is ending soon. “I’m glad you’re here!” She smiles softly up at him as he makes his way over to her. “I’m going over possible suitors now; I could use your keen mind.”

Fucking Suitors. He cannot tolerate this any longer.

“Rhaenyra.” His voice is commanding but still gentle- always gentle with her. “Rhaenyra, stop for a moment.”

“I can’t. I can’t stop Daemon. I have to find someone to help protect my children.”

“Rhaenyra-” he tries again but she keeps going, not heeding his words at all.

“The Greens will only take advantage of my weakness and press for my sons to be cast into more doubt and I cannot-”

“Rhaenyra!” He bites out in a sharp tone, and she halts, looking up at him with shock. “Stop, for a moment.” He says and she puts her quill down. She sits there, waiting to hear what it is that he has to say, her arms crossed over her chest and her eyebrows raised. Daemon takes a deep breath and steels himself. “*Dīnagon issa .” Marry me* . He says and Rhaenyra’s mouth drops open in shock.

“What?” She breathes out and now Daemon continues with his trademark fire.

“Marry Me, Rhaenyra. I have loved you for so many years now. Even when I was married and separated from you, you haunted my every thought. My every waking moment was filled with thoughts of you and then when I finally drifted to sleep you plagued my dreams as well. I have spent every day longing to take you into my arms again and berating myself for never stealing you away on your wedding night.” A soft, pained, and yet loving expression comes over Rhaenyra’s face and he comes to kneel before her, taking her hands into his own. “Your children need a father, and my girls need a mother. You say you need a husband who can protect your children. Here I am. You know that I will guard your children as a dragon guards all that is his.”

“But my children-” Rhaenyra begins, standing and moving away from him in her uncertainty, however Daemon is determined and confident.

“I love your sons as if they were my own because they come from you, my darling Rhaenyra. I could not love them more if they came from my own seed. And little Joff has known no father, let me be his father and he will never want for love. And your daughter- I love her more than I thought possible for when I look at her I see what could have been made if I had allowed myself that moment so many years ago and taken you back in that brothel. I see a girl who could be our daughter and I want it. I want it all Rhaenyra.” His voice is full of passion, and he slowly walks over to her, step by step and yet she does not back away as he draws near. “I want to wake up to you every day. I want to eat at the table with our whole family at every meal and I want to teach and play with our children day after day. I want it all Rhaenyra and I know you do too.” He takes her into his arms and pulls her head to his chest. “*Nyke would zālagon se vys syt ao issa jorrāelagon.*” *I would burn the world for you, my love.*

“Daemon-” She breathes out in a voice so breathy and soft it is almost a whisper on a breeze but he hears it, he hears the longing and he revels in it.

“I will rain Fire and Blood on all who would stand against you and I will bring you the Seven Kingdoms on bended knee.” He pulls back and stares down at her with a gaze so loving and devoted. A soft smile breaks out over his love’s face and she begins to nod.

Daemon kneels before her, one of his hands still clutching hers while another fishes out the black ring that he had made for her so many years ago when he first asked Viserys for her hand. The ring that he had finally brought out again after dinner.

“Marry me, Rhaenyra.” She begins to nod again and tears course down her cheeks. Happy tears, so different from the ones she has cried for so many days now. She joins him on the floor, now kneeling across from him and she takes his face into her hands and presses a fierce, all consuming kiss to his lips before pulling away, breathless.

“I’ll marry you, Daemon Targaryen.” She whispers against his mouth and a true smile breaks out across his face as he slips the ring onto her finger and claims her mouth with his once more.

Less than a week later, the entire family stands on the volcanic shores of Dragonstone ready to behold a marriage of their family's ancient heritage.

Daemon and Rhaenyra had told their children of their agreement to marry one another and much to their joy, the children had accepted it readily. Jace, Visenya, and Luke had seemed most relieved that Daemon was to become their new father and Visenya had even gone to hug him and give him congratulations. Rhaena and Baela had turned to Rhaenyra and kissed her cheeks and called her mother.

Now they stood, the girls draped in gowns of bloody red and the boy clothed in the darkest of black. Rhaenys and Corlys stood behind the children, their hands bearing their own scars from their own Valyrian wedding, and they nodded their permission and gave their daughter away to Daemon.

Draped in the traditional ivory and red wedding robes of Valyria and Rhaenyra crowned with the bridal headpiece, they stood and watched as the Valyrian priest lit each of the fourteen pyres that sat in a semicircle around the couple. He then said the prayer to the gods of Valyria, asking for their blessing upon this most holy union in the eyes of the Old Motherlands.

In the name of Arrax the marriage is declared lawful and holy and in the name of Syrax he asks the gods to make the marriage fruitful and blessed. He finishes the prayer in the name of Balerion, asking the ancient god of Death to only separate them in death and that their souls would remain as one even as they departed the world.

Daemon cuts his lip and traces the rune for fire on Rhaenyra's forehead and they all watch as she cuts her own and traces the rune for blood on Daemon. The priest continues the binding words as the couple slice their palms and their hands are bound together. They drink from the chalice together and their lips come together, sealing their union as their family looks on.

In the midst of all of the horror, sadness, and devastation to come for just a moment the family finds a small piece of happiness.

It is the early morning the day after his marriage and Daemon finds his new daughter in the training yard, holding a training sword with tears in her eyes and a look of longing. He remembers Rhaenyra telling him how Laenor had sworn that Visenya would one day wield a sword with the proficiency of her namesake and so Daemon presses forward. He is her father now and he will continue where Laenor has left.

“Are you going to stare at the sword or train, daughter?” He calls out, picking up his own training sword and testing its balance in his hand. She spins to face him, her eyes wide and her mouth opens and closes a few times before she settles on shrugging. Daemon comes to stand in the middle of the yard and smiles at her. “Take your stance.” He tells her and a watery smile breaks out over Visenya’s face and she comes to meet him in the middle, taking up a stance that is fairly good for a seven year old. He swings lightly, testing her skills and when she meets him with surprising ferocity for a child he smiles with pride. He praises her as they train and she glows under his praise and that afternoon they go to break their afternoon fast together, dripping with sweat and Rhaenyra beams at the smile etched across her daughter's face.

From that moment on, he and Visenya train every morning and he watches as her heart mends from the loss of her father.

Dragonstone spends the next decade brimming with laughter and chaos as six children run through its halls. The six of them become inseparable and

no one would ever know that they had once been strangers. Jace and Rhaena spend many hours reading stories of dragon lore and tales of their family history. Jace then goes and joins Baela to race their dragons through the sky every afternoon. Luke and Baela are often found laughing in the courtyards together as they play with the many dogs that are kept at Dragonstone, both of them finding joy amongst the life of Dragonstone. But it is the relationship between the girls that grows the closest.

Rhaena, Baela, and Visenya become one, a three headed dragon of beauty and mischievousness. Daemon often swears that they will be the death of him and that he will have to fend off suitors from every corner of the world with Dark Sister and Caraxes. Visenya finds so much happiness on Dragonstone that she never even thinks to miss Aemond.

Rhaenys visits as often as she can, but with Coryls back in the Stepstones she is forced to hold Driftmark alone- Vaemond trying to whisper poison in her ears- and so her visits become fewer and far between but her letters come often. And while the family determinedly refuses to step foot in the Red Keep due to the Hightowers, the king makes it his mission to visit them at least once every two months and spend a few days with his favorite child, his brother, and his beloved grandchildren.

“Good morning Muña, Kepa.” fourteen-year-old Visenya greets as she comes into Daemon and Rhaenyra’s solar where the family meets to break their fast every morning. Rhaenyra has insisted upon the tradition that they always greet one another with love every morning and so Visenya makes her way around the table to greet everyone.

She walks to her mother who holds Daemon’s hand in her own as she speaks to Luke about riding Arrax this afternoon. She leans down and presses a kiss to her mother’s cheek and her mother reaches up and presses and affectionate hand to Visenya’s cheek in greeting. Visenya then goes to Daemon and he pulls her forehead down to meet his lips.

“How did you sleep, *tala* ?” *Daughter* . He asks, ever a loving and attentive father. She kisses his cheek and moves to greet Luke and Baela while she answers him.

“Very well, *Kepa*.” *Father*. She ruffles Joff’s hair who whines as he tries to smoth his curls back down. Jace rises to hug her before she takes her seat between Rhaena and Daemon. “I was thinking that I would take Vermithor out today.” She tells her mother when she asks what Visenya plans to do that day. Visenya then turns to Daemon with a troublesome spark in her eyes. “You should come *Kepa*. We could race.” Daemon lets out a joking groan.

“Again?” he moans out. “We just raced a few days ago.”

“You’re only complaining because I beat you.” Visenya laughs and everyone at the table laughs at the sore expression on his face, knowing how much of a bad loser he is.

“Since when do you back down from a challenge, *Kepa*?” Baela asks with a mocking tone and Daemon scowls playfully at her.

“You’re right Baela.” He turns to Visenya and ruffles her curls. “I accept your challenge and today you and Vermithor will fall to the might of Caraxes and I.”

“I believe that we should all come and watch this mighty competition.” Rhaenyra declares from her spot as she rubs baby Aegon’s back while she feeds him. Daemon reaches over to stroke his newest son's soft, silver hair.

They all end up in the fields around the volcano to watch Daemon and Visenya mount their mighty beasts and race. Dragonstone calls itself home to almost as many dragons that the Dragonpit had during the reign of King Jaehaerys. Arrax, Moondancer, Vermax, and little Tyraxes grow faster than the younger hatchlings in Kings Landing, the lack of chains and the abundance of freedom and food doing them good. Syrax has only grown larger and she and Caraxes have even built a nest for themselves. Seasmoke had been unable to part with the children of his master and so he had

followed them to Dragonstone, finding solace in the heat of the Volcano where he had disappeared and had not reemerged for the past 6 years.

But as much as the others have grown, Vermithor has only grown larger. Freedom has made him a beast of monstrous proportion and his bronze scales gleam with good health. He rumbles with happiness as his young rider runs her hands over his scales and presses her forehead to the side of his head. Their bond is close and deep, having only grown in the six years they have been bonded.

“Four laps around the island and the first to land back here is the victor.” Calls out Mother, setting the terms to which Daemon and Visenya agree. They shake hands and bow to one another jokingly before mounting their dragons. Caraxes and Vermithor rumble back and forth to one another as if they sense the competition between their rides and they both begin to shake out their wings. In the end, Vermithor and Visenya take yet another victory and they give Visenya a crown of flowers to commemorate her win. The rest of the day is full of other races.

Dragon racing and mock fights in the sky become a weekly occurrence.

Over the years Visenya encourages Rhaena to try and claim Seasmoke, confident that it would do them both some good but Rhaena adamantly refuses.

“He is your father’s dragon and while I know that you and your siblings all have mounts, it still feels like stealing.” Rhaena tells her everytime Visenya brings it up to which Visenya only shakes her head fondly and tells Rhaena it isn’t stealing if the siblings are happy to see it. Rhaena does often join Visenya on Vermithor’s back though.

When Visenya turns fifteen, Daemon tells her it may be time to lock her in a tower to keep any troublesome boys away and Visenya collapses in laughter. Jace makes a disgusted face and as they share their cake, he tells her that she isn't allowed to entertain any suitors. She only rolls her eyes at her twin and tells him that he must then follow that rule as well.

For their fifteenth birthday, Daemon lets them each wield Dark Sister for a round of training. Jace wields it with practiced ease and everyone claps as he claims a victory against the weapons master. When it is Visenya's turn everyone beholds the scene and sees the significance of it.

Dark Sister rests in the hands of Visenya Targaryen once more (it does not matter that technically she is a Velaryon). Her hair bound up in braids and tight training leathers adorning her body, Visenya spins through the courtyard, felling the attackers one by one before placing the sword to the neck of the weapons master. Everyone claps and comes to congratulate her.

"It is natural in your hands." Kepa tells her and Jace jokes that perhaps he ought to hand it over to her to which Daemon pretends to clutch his sword close.

Not long after Visenya and Jace turn fifteen, Baela leaves to reside at Driftmark.

"Do you have to go?" Visenya whispers in a pained tone as she and Baela cling to one another in goodbye. Moondancer watches them in the background, waiting for her rider to mount her so that they can fly to Driftmark.

"Grandmother is so lonely and I fear for her health with Uncle Vaemond there trying to steal the Driftwood Throne and Grandfather gone. She needs someone at her side." Baela whispers back and Visenya feels herself nodding in understanding. Understanding does not stop the tears that drip from both of their eyes as Baela mounts her dragon and flies away.

“You will still see her often.” Daemon murmurs to her in comfort as he pulls her in for a side hug.

“I know. But I hate to lose such a close friend.” Both Aemond and Baela flash in her mind before Visenya shakes her head determinedly to rid herself of these thoughts before she looks up at her *Kepa* and asks him if he would like to train.

Aemond's birthdays are never met with great celebration. The family does not gather for the entire day to celebrate him. He receives a few gifts from his mother, siblings, and grandfather. His father gives him one as well, but Aemond is fairly certain that his mother is the one who actually is behind it. His birthday dinner is a quiet and slightly tense affair, especially when King Viserys brings up the fact that Visenya's birthday will be coming soon and that he will have to visit her. Aemond stabs his dinner at the mention and Helaena winces while Aegon struggles to hide his laugh at his brother's hatred for the Velaryon-Targaryen Princess.

For Aemond's sixteenth birthday Aegon takes him to a brothel and gifts him a Lysene whore that he had brought just for Aemond's birthday. The girl is clothed only with a sheer robe and her straight, silver hair falls down her back. Her pale purple eyes gleam up at him while she offers an attempt at a seductive smile and Aemond scowls.

“I know she's just a pale imitation of the real thing, but I digress.” Aegon shrugs, taking that horrible pleasure that he always does in making Aemond mad. “Happy Birthday Brother.” Aemond has to restrain himself from throwing his brother to the floor and having an all out fight with him. He does take the whore however and while his brother falls into his cups and the arms of many whores that night, Aemond finds himself deep in the cunt of the Lysene whore.

That night when he fucks the whore he takes her from behind so that he does not have to gaze upon her fair Valyrian features. The sight of her purple eyes only infuriates him. He fists her hair and yanks, pouring his frustration into fucking the girl and he feels that ever present hatred and bitterness rise in his chest as he recalls his father's words at *Aemond's* birthday dinner.

"My dear Visenya turns 12 next week, I shall have to visit her and bring her all those wonderful gifts that I've found for her! I had another dragon model carved for her!" His father's focus on that wretched girl when it should have been on his own son. His father only ever thinking of Rhaenyra's family when his had a perfectly good (and legitimate) family seated around him and a son who many would be happy to have turning sixteen.

Gods how he hates them

He hates his father for being so absent and such a fool. He hates his brother for being such a fucking idiot and for bringing him the whore. He hates Rhaenyra for being so fucking special that their father can think of no other but her and her family. He hates his nephews- Jace for being the heir and the other two for the bastard blood that runs through their veins and spitting on the esteemed name of Targaryen. And by the gods how he hates *her*.

He hates her name; he hates how her name is always on his father's lips and on the minds of everyone in the court. He hates her for having Vermithor, he hates her for having loving parents. He longs to run her through with his sword and watch as the life dies from her eyes as he stands triumphantly over her. He longs to take her eye as she had helped take his and for her to know the humiliation that he suffers from her merely existing. He hates her for her betrayal. He hates her for the breath that she draws into her lungs every day and he loathes her entire existence with every fiber of his being.

He finishes in the whore and sends her away before stalking back to the Keep, shoving his brother out of the way when Aegon asks what it was like to spend the night deep in the depths of Valyria.

There is nothing but hate in his heart for Visenya Velaryon.

Family Reunites

Chapter Notes

I won't update for about 3 more days because I'm going out of town so enjoy this!

I feel like if you guys knew the songs I use to inspire my writing y'all would cry lol. It spells out their whole relationship

Baela spends two years learning by Grandmother's side, helping her to rule Driftmark as Grandfather continues to wage war in the Stepstones. In those two years she wears Velaryon Blue and Silver, abandoning her Targaryen red and black that she wore often on Dragonstone. Her Grandmother needs solidarity during this trying time as Uncle Vaemond seeks to steal what is not his.

Many ravens fly back and forth between Dragonstone and Driftmark, the six siblings remaining in close contact with one another. The family often comes to visit at least once a month since the journey is not too far and on some occasions, Baela returns home to Dragonstone- like when Muña gives birth to baby Viserys. Baela spends two whole weeks there with Muña and the family, relishing in her time with them as well as showing off how large Moondancer has grown- the dragon being almost 13 now, only two years younger than her. Three months after Viserys is born, Rhaenyra brings all of her children to visit Grandmother, who cries as she holds her newest grandson in her arms.

Now Baela stands by her grandmother's side as she hears petitions atop the Driftwood Throne. Grandmother receives news of Grandfather for the first time in months- and it is horrid news at that. Grandfather has suffered a terrible wound and now lays feverish and possibly dying. Baela squeezes Grandmother's hand tight in her own and wills herself to be strong in the face of the possibility of losing yet another loved one.

“Grandfather is strong. He will survive this.” She tells Grandmother who tries to give her a comforting smile, it fails because it is so weak with fear, but Baela appreciates the effort. But despite their attempts to keep a positive outlook for the sake of Grandfather’s health, Vaemond slinks in to whisper more poison in the halls of Driftmark.

He questions the succession of the Driftwood Throne and even clouded with grief and worry, the Great Dragon that is Rhaenys rises to the challenge, always ready to defend her family- her house.

“I am the Sea Snake’s blood! The closest kin he has left!” Vaemond hisses out to the Velaryon matriarch, and she only raises an eyebrow. She wonders if he intentionally phrases his words that way to cast doubt upon and possibly denounce Jacaerys and Visenya. It would not surprise her if that was the intent coming from Vaemond’s mouth- his ambition knows no bounds.

“Tread carefully Good-brother, it sounds as if you speak treason. The princes Jacaerys, Lucerys, and Joffrey as well as the Princess Visenya are alive and well. It would not do well for you if someone were to hear you wish ill will upon them.” Both Baela and Rhaenys knows that if Visenya were a boy this matter would be a non-discussion but since she is a girl and lawfully as well as by precedent, succession passes to Lucerys over her, this treasonous line of thinking rises once more. (Rhaenys knows that Vaemond will never allow a woman to take the Driftwood Throne, even one who rides Vermithor and has only the purest of Valyrian heritage). “The matter is decided.” Rhaenys tells him and she watches the fury rise in the lesser than, second son of the Velaryon line.

“Driftmark is mine by right.” He declares to her fiercely. “And while I would like your help good-sister, I do not need it. The winds have shifted and the crown has good reason to side in my favor.”

“My cousin, the king will have your tongue for this.” She snarls at him, but the snake only smiles that venomous smile at her.

“But it is not the King who sits the Iron Throne these days, it is a queen.” He tells her and Rhaenys suddenly understands just how dangerous the

waters around her are. This is not mere complaining as Vaemond is wont to do, this is a true conspiracy with a chance of working.

And so Rhaenys hatches a plan on the spot to catch and kill a snake.

She feigns an accepting and thoughtful look and a slow nod. She asks Vaemond for more details as if she is considering siding with him. She tells Vaemond that it would be best to go to Kings Landing and press the claim for all to hear, to put an end to this once and for all by denouncing Princess Rhaenyra as well as her bastard sons. Rhaenys tells him that she will fly to Kings Landing and join him in his case against the children of Princess Rhaenrya. The only caveat she has is that he promises to marry her Baela and Rhaena to his sons. Baela gives her a horrified look and Rhaenys wants to apologize but she cannot in the moment because Baela's betrayed gasp only sells the plot to Vaemond.

It is only that night when Baela comes to her Grandmother's chambers that Rhaenys tells her the truth and the pair compose a letter together to send to their family on Dragonstone.

Rhaena and Visenya stand, arms linked, as they wait with the Dragon Keepers for Kepa to reappear from within the volcano. Rhaena holds in her hand a missive from their other sister and the two girls wear matching expressions of worry as they wait. Kepa reappears with his giant satchel full, his face and hair stained with soot, and a beaming smile on his face as he bounds down the mountain to greet them.

“Syrax maghatan nykeā arlie clutch. Hāre drōma!” Syrax has brought a fresh clutch. Three eggs! He repeats the words ‘three eggs’ again in his excitement as he smiles at his girls and hands the satchel off to the Keepers. He then presses affectionate, albeit sooty, kisses to his daughters' foreheads. *“Rhaena jāhor emagon z̄ȳhon iderēbagon hen drōma se pār nyke jāhor iderēptan mēre naejot dīnagon isse Prince Viserys's cradle.” Rhaena will*

have her pick of the eggs and then I will chose one for Prince Viserys' cradle. He says to both the Keepers and his daughter, waiting for her to smile at his words but she does not, her lips pressing thin with worry and Daemon waves the Keepers away. "What is it?" He asks Rhaena, looking back and forth from her and Visenya.

"A raven has come from Baela." A phrase that is normally spoken with such excitement is now uttered only in a grave tone and Daemon takes the proffered parchment from Rhaena, unraveling it to read the ominous message from his last daughter.

"Father, snakes swim in these bloody waters. Vaemond has sailed to Kings Landing to press his claim to the Driftwood Throne before Queen Alicent and the Hand. He means to challenge succession and the sanctity of blood. All the blood. By the time you recieve this, Grandmother and I will have flow to Kings Landing in order to carry out the will of the gods and put the rightful heir of Driftmark upon his seat." - Baela

He takes his daughters hands and together they swiftly make their way to the Keep.

Where Daemon is with the girls, Rhaenyra is with the boys. Baby Viserys is down for a nap, but the rest sit in various places in the Room of the Painted Table. Joffrey- her boy is now so grown as he stands tall and strong at the age of ten- reads the book that Daemon had given him on the lore of bonding with your dragon. Tyraxes was nine now and while Joff had already mounted her, their bond was still weak and so Daemon aimed to help him improve it.

Aegon played on a mat by the hearth with his nursemaid and every once in a while, Rhaenyra would reach over and brush his curls with her fingers. Luke was the only boy not present; he was down in the training yard with his sword master.

But it was Jacaerys who drew the most attention. It had been made more apparent to him over the last two months that were his sisters as well as his uncles excelled in Valyrian, his remained spotty. As future king, he now aimed to change that and so now he stood at the painted table with the maester, practicing Valyrian translation through stories of their ancestors.

Her precious boy was trying so hard to be a good heir to the Throne and so he had received nothing but encouragement from his parents. (Daemon was sometimes a bit harder on him, yesterday he would not acknowledge anything Jace said unless it was in High Valyrian.) She watches as his frustration grows with his shortcomings and she tries to grant him reprieve but her stubborn boy only pushes on.

“I don’t expect you to learn High Valyrian in a day, Jace.” She says, attempting to comfort the seventeen-year-old boy.

“A King should honor the traditions of his forebears.” He replies stubbornly and she shakes her head at him. “Besides, Vis was fluent when she was seven.”

“Oh Jace,” she sighs and comes up to squeeze his arm. “Your sister forced herself to become fluent to make up for the fact that she had no dragon. You cannot compare the two of you. Besides, unless you are planning to depose me you have plenty of time to learn. Perhaps you should practice more with your sisters?” She offers and Jace nods thoughtfully but his expression is still one that reeks of self-disappointment.

Daemon makes his entrance with the girls and a look that speaks of bad news and Rhaenyra braces herself for whatever bad tidings he brings. She dismisses the maester but before she can dismiss the children Daemon holds up a hand, halting her.

“This concerns them, they should hear it.” He tells her and Rhaenyra’s eyes squeeze shut as she thinks of what he could possibly be preparing to tell her. Rhaena and Visenya’s expressions do nothing to ease her worries as they

come up to press kisses to her cheek. He hands her the missive and as she reads it, her husband looks around at their boys.

“Kepa!” Three-year-old Aegon babbles happily, and Daemon feels the gentle smile take over his face. He wiggles his fingers in hello at his toddler son and the boy gives a strong wave back. A sudden and strong collision to his left side almost knocks the breath out of him and he looks down to see that Joff has come to greet him with a hug. To Daemon, Joff is his precious boy, his son, and to Joff? Daemon is the only father he has ever known and loved. Joff knows of Laenor and he is told many stories and he longs to meet his first father but, in his heart, his true father is Prince Daemon Targaryen. One of the side doors of the room opens and Luke comes walking in, still sweaty and breathing heavy as if he has run all the way up here.

“Kepa.” Luke greets as he comes to stand by Jace at the table and everyone around them makes a face at the stench of sweat that comes off of him in waves. The children pick up on the tension emitting from their parents and the room goes still with anxiety as Rhaenyra huffs a disbelieving sigh and looks back up at Daemon while Visenya goes to Jace, who presses a kiss to the side of her head.

“He means to call into question Luke’s legitimacy? And by extension Jace and Visenya and by extension my own claim to the throne!” Luke flinches at the words, hating every reminder of the fact that his hair is brown and not black or silver. Every reminder that instead of deeper brown of Jace or even the light brown of Visenya, his skin is light and his features a mix of common and Valyrian instead of just Valyrian like the twins.

Visenya wears a sharp frown at her mother’s words and Jace only grows more worried, pulling Visenya close. No one has ever questioned their legitimacy; it always having been plain that they belonged to Laenor Velaryon. But understanding dawns on Visenya’s face and she laughs at the words.

“He only casts doubt on mine and Jace’s legitimacy because even if Luke and Joff were cast aside I would still stand in his way. Being a girl isn’t a good enough reason for me to be disinherited from Driftmark so he will

make to call me a bastard.” She scoffs. Her words ring true in the minds of the others.

“Vaemond only cares for Driftmark and for the Velaryon line, not for our politics.” Daemon agrees. “If he means to cast doubt on Luke or Visenya and Jace it is only for his own gain, not for the game for the Iron Throne. Has he made common cause with Otto yet?”

“That is what I fear. Mother has flown to court.” Rhaenyra replies, her hands dropping, the letter still clasped between them as she thinks of her mother flying to court with Vaemond.

“Good. I have no doubt that she helped Baela write this letter. She’s always been an underhanded and conniving planner, that one. I’m sure she already plots how to spin this in our favor and take Vaemond’s feet out from under him. Rhaenys is not a snake, she is a dragon and she will nest with her kind, not his.” Daemon reassures his wife but Rhaenyra's eyes are full of worry and she fiddles with her fingers nervously.

“But my father does not seat the throne,” she fires back softly, doubting what they can do when the Venom of the Hightowers spreads from the throne. “They rule in his name and my father...” she trails off and her eyes glisten. It has been almost two years since they had seen King Viserys, his health taking a terrible turn and forcing him to remain in Kings Landing. She quickly wipes the water from her eyes so that the children do not see. “What choice do we have?” She says into the air and Daemon gives that accepting smile of his before reaching out to run a soft, fatherly hand of love over her pregnant belly, his love for his family as always stronger than anything else. The children all begin to walk close until they stand as a group, looking over the table and Daemon gives each of his children a nod-telling them it will be alright.

“To Kings Landing then!” He spoke with false cheeriness and Rhaena gave a mocking cheer that managed to pull a small laugh out of Visenya and Luke. Jace however had an expression of happiness at the thought of returning to the place he had once called home, where he had once lived happily with his Papa and their family.

“We must tell the household to begin to ready the ships and pack.” Rhaenyra murmurs as she brings Luke in for a tight hug, brushing her hand through his wild brown curls. His purple eyes that looked so much like hers gleamed up at her with uncertainty and she gave him a smile in return.

“Wait!” Jace calls and they all turn their attention to where he stands, his fists planted on the painted table, looking at it with a thoughtful yet determined expression. “About our arrival, the Hightowers will be sure to snub us. They are already determined to side against us. We need to appear strong, to make an entrance and put to rest any doubt that anyone would have about Luke and Joff.”

“I am not sure, my darling-” Rhaenyra begins but Daemon takes her hand, quietly halting her and gesturing towards Jace.

“He will one day be Prince of Dragonstone and King after that. Let him practice, let’s see what he would do if he were you.” Daemon whispers and nods for Jace to continue.

“We arrive in a full retinue; we make as much noise as possible and demand as much attention.” Jace declares boldly and Daemon breaks into a grin.

“How would we arrive? How do we send a good message through our arrival.” He asks, continuing to press the boy for details and Jace falters. A goes quiet and looks over the table for a moment and Daemon goes to encourage him but Visenya speaks up from her place beside him.

“We should bring as much of the household as possible. We bring all the ladies' maids, a large portion of our servants, and almost all of our guards. We come in with a veritable small army and make our presence known to all of Kings Landing but especially to the Greens. We make sure that we command respect to let everyone know that the Princess of Dragonstone and heir to the throne is coming. We could even have Syrax or Caraxes join us to ensure that everyone gets our message, after all , you're an expert at making dramatic entrances *Kepa*.” She looks at Daemon and Rhaenyra for approval and Daemon smiles as Rhaenyra glows with pride.

“Well done, *tala* .” Daemon nods approvingly and Visenya smiles at him, soaking up the praise. “But as you said, I am known for making dramatic entrances, so there are a few changes that I would make...”

“Your Grace!” the voice of a Kingsguard calls out to Alicent and she grits her teeth in frustration at the feeling of being pulled in every direction.

“Your Grace there is a situation.” The guard tells her, coming to a walk just behind her and she shakes her head.

“I am sure that whatever it is that you are well prepared to deal with it, Ser Erryk.” She continues to march through the halls so that she can go to greet the Crown Princess and her husband after their loud entrance into the Keep with their small army and retinue of a hundred that had gathered many spectators, only undermining what Alicent's father had hoped to accomplish.

“I am Ser Erryk, Your Grace.” He corrects and internally Alicent scolds herself for not remembering. “However, I am not sure I am best suited to deal with the matter. It’s Prince Aegon...” the knight trails off, his tone one full of trepidation and Alicent comes to a quick halt and spins to stare at the Knight with a wary look.

“I do not have much time before the Princess and her retinue arrive so whatever it is spit it out.” She commands and ser Erryk gives a sharp nod.

“The Prince Aegon has turned his chambers into-” he pauses again, and she sees him debating with himself on what to say. “He’s turned his chambers into a brothel.” His words come out in a rush and Alicent’s face hardens.

“What?” She snaps before storming off to find her son.

Prince Aegon Targaryen is asleep on his bed in the middle of the room with a dozen whores in various places, some asleep, two lounging beside him and all three of them painting a horrible picture of naked debauchery. She recognizes three of them as Helaena's ladies' maids.

Alicent slams the door open and storms in causing many of the girls to shriek at the sight of the queen. They scramble to cover themselves and hastily dips curtsies to her.

"Out. GET OUT ALL OF YOU!" She shrieks and they fall over themselves to obey her command, the two girls that lay beside Aegon are gone in a flash when they come face to face with the wrathful appearance of his queenly mother.

"Aegon. Get up." She snaps but the little ingrate does not even stir. "Aegon!" She tries again to no avail and the tiny threads that remained of her patience snap. She rips the sheet that barely covers any of him off and screeches his name as she slams her hands down on the bed in frustration and humiliation at her son. He lazily grabs the sheet back from her and covers himself before rolling over.

"Mother?" He asks, his voice hazy with sleep. "What is it?" She gapes at her son's audacity, gasping breaths coming from her mouth as she beholds the wretch that is her eldest child.

"What is it?" she repeats, incredulous. "What is it? That is all you can say for yourself?" Her voice is one that is strained- she is so worn and tired of dealing with the humiliations that she keeps being handed day after day and she will not tolerate them from her son now as well.

"Has something happened?" comes his muffled voice from where his head is pressed into his pillow. She stands over him, shaking with rage.

"You have turned your chambers into a brothel!" She hisses. "You bring shame and humiliation on us as you degrade our home for everyone to see! I work so hard to bring glory and honor to this house and you tarnish everything with your thoughtless actions and debauchery."

“Oh that?” he rolls over and presses his hands to his eyes as he rubs sleep from them. “That was just some harmless fun, mother. There is no need to make a big deal out of it.” He sighs as if there is some great weight on him and Alicent only shakes her head at him.

“Think of the shame on your wife! On poor, sweet Helaena, on me? How can you keep carrying on like this?” Tears of frustration, anger, and shame come through in her voice as she heaves every word out as if they weigh heavily on her soul. “Especially on a day like today!”

“What is today?” He asks in that careless tone of his and her rage peaks. Her hand flies across his face and he does not even flinch. She bends down to his eye level.

“You are no son of mine.” She whispers as he looks up at her from behind the curtain of his greasy hair. His eyes are foggy, and she turns away from him.

“You ask too much of me, mother!” He cries out as she walks away, and she turns around to face him with a scoff. He stands before her with a wet voice and teary eyes. “I try so hard; I do everything you ask and yet I am never enough. Never enough for you, for grandfather, or for father. I will always fall short in your eyes.” She cannot reply though because Helaena enters the room with her an expression of curiosity.

“Aegon? Do you know where my ladies' maids are? They were supposed to help me dress the children.” She asks with a frustrated tone. Alicent rushes to her daughter and yanks her into a fierce hug much to Helaena's confusion.

“My dear girl.” Alicent murmurs as she pulls back and Helaena only stares at her.

Before anyone can say anything a dreadful shriek sounds through the air, the beating of wings sounding out and the windows shake. Aegon rushes to the window to see what it was and Alicent joins him. (Helaena has not for she begins to mutter again. ‘Dragons will Dance today.’)

Out of the clouds comes the Great Bronze Fury, the King of the Dragons returned to King's Landing. His powerful roars reach every corner of the city and she watches as he flies past the keep, his might in the air causing a window to break, a gust to swirl up, loud shrieks fill the air as people watch the mighty beast. From within the Dragonpit come the sounds of the other dragons, rumbling, trilling, and roaring their faint responses to Vermithor's arrival.

On his back sits Princess Visenya and she looks as though she were some great Conqueror of as if she is Queen Visenya Targaryen come again with her hair braided up as she sits astride a great dragon. Vermithor soars to the Pit, his wings beating fiercely as he lands, and he lets out a final shriek as he disappears from sight.

“Holy shit.” Aegon whispers behind her, astounded by the size and appearance of Vermithor (he is still smaller than Aemond’s Vhagar, but Vermithor is larger than any of others). She cannot even find it in herself to scold Aegon for his words.

“Dragons will Dance today.” Helaena sings behind him. “The dragons begin their dance today.”

Alicent rubs her forehead to stave off her headache and leaves the room.

Her meeting with the Princess Rhaenyra and Prince Daemon does not go well in the slightest. Daemon is as insolent as ever, making caustic remarks about the king's failing health and scoffing at the new fixtures of the Faith. Alicent leaves the meeting more tired than she would like.

While their parents take on Queen Alicent and Rhaena takes the younger boys to see Baela and Grandmother, Luke, Jace, and Visenya don their training leathers and head down to the training yard, ready to work out their

frustrations before they go to court. They knew that they would have a long day of fighting for their rights, for their own inheritance and so they resolved to have just a few moments of fun first. Before Muña and Kepa left to greet Grandfather, Kepa had grabbed the three of them and held them behind for a moment.

“Do not get yourselves into trouble, *Riñar*” *Children*. He always called them children when he was scolding them or laying out rules, he knew his troublemaker children too well and was always on the lookout for chaos that originated from them. He raised his eyebrows at them, waiting for them to nod their obedience and they all did.

“We’ll do our best.” Visenya muttered and He lightly cuffed her head (not even hard enough to hurt, just enough to ruffle her hair).

“I better not have to come scrape your bloody and beaten bodies out of the dirt.” He called after them and they had all called back various noises and unintelligible shouts that could be taken as affirmatives.

As the three wove their way through the halls and out to the stairs that led down to the training yard, everyone bowed or curtsied as Jace and Visenya strode past, but they stared at Luke with blatant disgust and began to whisper loudly amongst themselves, spreading malicious rumors.

“It’s smaller than I remember.” Luke grumbled as they walked down the steps. Jace scoffed and turned to give him an incredulous look.

“It looks exactly the same.” the eldest responded and Visenya gave him a light shove, causing him to stumble over one of the steps.

“He was five the last time we were here. Of course it’s smaller than he remembers.” Jace only rolled his eyes at her before taking her hand and dragging her down the steps while calling to Luke to hurry after them. The staring only grew more intense as they walked through the courtyard until Ser Steffon of the Kingsguard let out a shocked noise and hurried over to them.

“Are these the little dragons I once watched over?” He called and all three of their faces brightened at the sight of a friendly face. “You are not such small dragons anymore!” Visenya pulled her and Jace's former Kingsguard into a hug (he had always been uncomfortable when she had done it when she was younger but when she was about 6 years old, he had begun to humor her and allow the hugs) and he patted her back affectionately before releasing her and giving her and her brothers a once over, patting Jace on the shoulder and ruffling Luke's hair before turning back to Visenya. “Kings Landing is a brighter place now that you have returned Princess for your beauty illuminates the city.” Visenya laughed delightedly.

“You flatter me, good Ser.Perhaps you will join me in a mock fight later?” She proposed and the Knight gave a nod.

“I'd be happy to, as well as a match with the princes if that is alright.” He turned to the boys and Jace nodded eagerly while Luke gave a noncommittal shrug. Visenya frowned at him. She and Jace spoke to Ser Steffon a moment longer before he returned to training with his fellow guards. After a few moments of wandering about Visenya spotted a giant crater in the wall of the gates and she pointed it out to Jace with a giggle.

The pair began to tease their younger brother about it but he was unwilling to join them in their fun and games, his sour mood hanging over him like a thunderstorm as he lurked around the courtyard.

“What's your problem?” Jace asked their brother as the three of them looked over the swords, trying to choose the best ones they wanted to train with.

“Everyone is staring at us!” He huffed in frustration, even though he was about to turn fifteen, Luke was still prone to bouts of childishness as he whined about the stares. “No one would think to question my being heir to Driftmark if I looked a little more like Laenor Velaryon and a little less like Harwin Strong.” He hissed out before looking over Jace and Visenya's appearances with sullenness. “If I looked more like the two of you.” Visenya was a bit taken aback by the force of bitterness in his tone but she placed a sympathetic hand on Luke's arm.

“It doesn’t matter what they think.” Jace comforted him.

“You are Papa’s son, he claimed you from the day your conception was announced to court and he was the first to hold you. He defended your claim every day of his life and these people seek to dishonor his memory and spit on everything he stood for.” Visenya whispers into Luke’s ear with ferocity and Jace nods his agreement, and as he goes to say something more he is interrupted by the sound of metal clashing violently with that of a shield. The three siblings all turn to follow the source of the sound to see a fight going on, surrounded by many spectators. Jace goes to watch, Visenya and Luke hot on his heels.

A long, silver haired man swings his sword at Criston, who is forced to take a step back to avoid getting hit. The knight’s answer to the swing is to bring his morningstar down on the other man’s shield, cratering it and shattering the top portion of it. On one knee, the man scoffs loudly and tosses the shield away before rising and taking two violent swings at the Kingsguard who retaliates by bringing his morningstar down, burying into the dirt where the man had been standing only seconds before. The two men circle one another, and the face of the mysterious silver haired fighter is revealed to them.

Dressed in black leather and a black eyepatch over his left eye, Prince Aemond circles Criston like a ferocious, hissing dragon. Jace and Luke recoil at the realization of who exactly the deadly fighter before them is. Jace and Visenya exchange a look before forcing Luke behind them and stepping together to create a shield, blocking Luke from being seen by the man he once scarred.

But Visenya is not taken aback.

She is frozen, she stands and stares, taking in the sight of the uncle she was once inseparable from. The uncle she once loved more than anyone in the world and who loved her the same. A moment of longing for her childhood rises in her but it is quickly tamped down by her memories of the last time she saw him.

The memory of him landing blow after blow on Baela and Rhaena. The image of him standing there with his hand wrapped around Luke's small throat, strangling the life out of her then 5 year old brother who chokes, and wheezes while tears stream down his face. The memory of him standing over Jace with a rock in his hand, ready to bring it down on her twin's face and crush his head.

For a moment Visenya is stuck in those moments, trapped and forced to relive them and she feels that hate and that overpowering terror she had felt come over her. Gods how she loathed that man. Her thoughts are interrupted and she is pulled from her memories by the wild swings of Criston's morningstar. She watches as Aemond ducks around the wild swings before gracefully spinning and bringing the tip of his sword to rest at Criston's throat.

Aemond smirks, triumphant in his victory as ser Criston gives him an approving smile and drops his weapon. Everyone around them begins to cheer and applaud and Aemond revells in it, taking a moment to soak in the appreciation and the glory. Today was shaping up to be a most delightful day. Breakfast with Helaena had gone well, Aegon would no doubt be in trouble for turning his rooms into a brothel last night, Mother, Grandfather, and Ser Vaemond were preparing to rip Lucerys Velaryon's inheritance right away from him. That little Strong Bastard was finally going to get what he deserved. All in all, this could be a fabulous day.

"Well done my prince. You'll be winning tourneys in no time." Aemond only sneered at those words, scoffing at those beloved tourneys and events that his mother's knight held so dear.

"I don't give a shit about tourneys." He said. He catches a glimpse of Jace, and behind him, Luke. Aemond opens his mouth, making a spiteful quip at them.

"Nephews!" He calls attention to them, not even deigning them with the honor of saying their names. "Come to train?" He waits with a mocking

expression, eager to hear their excuses for why they will turn him down when he hears *it*.

The laugh that used to make his heart pound in his chest, the laugh that brightened skies and lifted moods. The laugh that rang more clear and beautiful than the bells of the septs did. It sent spikes of irritation down his spine, grating on his nerves and he ground his teeth together wondering where it was coming from when she stepped into view.

There, clothed in black and red training leathers, a sword at her side, and her silvery-blond curls braided back with red and black ribbons stood Visenya Velaryon.

She gave him a hateful smirk and he snarled at her as his grip on his sword tightened.

“Uncle.” she says, her voice full of fake saccharine sweetness and the glare he gives her grows more intense.

“Niece.” He bites back and her smirk grows into a sharp grin. “Perhaps *you* would like to join me for a round?” He suggests, sure that she will turn him down. The spectators begin to whisper and his lips curl into a vicious smirk. Visenya only smiles and twirls her wrist, causing the sword to spin and she begins to meander into the middle of the circle, casual as can be and he has to force his expression to remain neutral.

“I can always use an excuse to tear into a,” she looks him up and down with an expression of superiority and he knows whatever she says is going to be a thinly veiled insult at him. “-training dummy.” She finishes her reply, and he hears Luke laugh from behind him at the fact that she has alluded to him being so talentless that he is akin to a training dummy. Hate swells in his chest and he points his sword at her.

“I will not be as easy for you to face as the men of straw that you doubtless hack away at as you play at being a warrior.” Aemond sneers and Jace gives a start, as if he wants to come and strike Aemond for speaking to Visenya with such a disrespectful and hateful tone but Luke grabs his arm and

shakes his head. Aemond's smirk grows to a grin at how easy it is to rile up his nephew.

Aemond and Visenya begin to circle one another, assessing each other's stances and the way they hold themselves. Aemond swings his sword for a practice strike and Visenya meets it easily, parrying it away before returning it with one of her own. He swings again, this time faster and with more force, she brings her sword up just in time, catching the blade close to her face and he presses his strength against it, bearing down on her with his hate. He can't help it, his mouth opens, and he goads her.

"Careful niece, or I may take your eye." He cannot deny the thrill he feels at the possibility of scarring her as visibly as she and Luke scarred him. For the world to see that he was able to mark and cut her as she did to him. Visenya leans in close and whispers in a breathy tone that sears through his veins and twists his gut with loathing.

"Or perhaps I'll take your other one." And she moves, throwing herself to the side causing his sword to slide off of hers and she swings so suddenly that he stumbles back in order to avoid losing his head. That laugh erupts from her mouth again and a growl of frustration and anger rumbles in the back of his throat causing Visenya's eyes to widen delightedly.

He makes to strike her again, but he is interrupted by the sound of horns and or marching soldiers. The heavy doors to the courtyard heave open and in march heralds and knights bearing the sigil of both House Hightower and House Velaryon. Behind them walks Ser Vaemond, a cocky and spiteful look on his face as he strides through the yard.

Both Aemond and Visenya put their swords down (despite the fact that both of them would very much like to continue, to truly fight and find out who would win). The time for petty training fights is over, now it is time for the true fight. The fight for their inheritance and for succession. The fight for honor, the fight for their rights.

Aemond casts one more glance at Visenya as he stalks out of the courtyard and his violet eyes clash with the deep indigo of Visenya's and he pauses for just a moment before he sneers at her and walks away.

This little trading of insults and slight clashing of swords has only served to further stoke the fire of hate in him.

The Story of a Second Born

Chapter Notes

This chapter is told literally only from the perspective of second borns.

Visenya, Rhaena, Aemond, I think a little of Daemon too. IDK it felt poetic to do idk.

I know I said I wouldn't update while on vacay but I got sucked in and now I present this chapter to you. And I'm working on the next. So I'm a big fat liar lol.

I feel like 'Teeth' by 5SOS is probably a great depiction of Visenya/Aemond rn

My greatest wish is that one day someone would make an edit of my fic. I would actually cry lol.

ENJOY!!

Inside the private chambers of Crown Princess Rhaenyra and her consort, Prince Daemon- 2 silver haired babes play on the floor by the fire as their elder brother Joff watches over them. Rhaenyra and Daemon stand by one of the windows, conversating quietly so that Rhaena and Joff and the babes could not hear.

Rhaena- ever their studios daughter- is reading her history books that are written in purely High Valyrian. Occasionally her eyes flick over to her parents as she tries to subtly eavesdrop on them. Her visit with Grandmother and Baela had gone well- Muña even joining them at one point so that she and Grandmother could have a private discussion. Both Muña and Grandmother had left their conversation wearing extremely satisfied expressions and Rhaena was ever so curious to learn what had them smiling like cats with a canary.

The door to the chambers slammed open- causing both Aegon and Viserys to cry as well as Rhaena to drop her book. Everyone turned to face the door and Kepa's hand was already at the hilt of his sword. Visenya, Jace, and Luke stood in the entry- Luke turning to shut the door behind them- and everyone relaxed at the revelation that the intruder was just loud children with no regard for the sanity of others.

The babies were still crying and so Kepa hurried over and swept Aegon up into his arms, making soft noises at his son to quiet his cries while Muña picked up Viserys and cradled the babe to her chest, humming at him for a few moments. Kepa frowned at the three eldest of his brood.

“Do you care to explain why you have stormed in here, *Riñar*?” He had the scolding expression he always wore when one of the children misbehaved or disobeyed him and Muña, his tone was one that brooked no argument- they would explain themselves. He continued to stroke Baby Aegon's hair and allowed the boy the play with the chain around his neck smiling at the babe who now cooed as he pulled on Kepa's adornments.

“Vaemond is here.” Jace declared and Rhaena sat up, with Vaemond here that meant it would be time to descend on the court to begin their plot to kill a snake in the morning.

“He came in full glory, escorted by the personal guard of the Hightowers and we followed them to see him meeting the Hand and the Queen privately.” Visenya's voice was tight with anger as she spoke, her eyes hard and mouth set in a frown. “We even managed to eavesdrop on their conversation.” Muña gave them a disapproving look that had the three siblings looking at the ground with shame before Kepa spoke up.

“And what did you learn?” He didn't seem disapproving at all, instead wearing an expression of amusement and slight pride at their actions.

“Vaemond has made a deal with the Greens.” Luke declared, walking further into the room and taking Viserys from Muña's arms so that she did not have to heft the weight of Viserys as well as the babe in her belly.

“It is as you feared Muña,” Jace sighs as he and Visenya come to sit with Rhaena. “Tomorrows hearing is to be a farce. It is a stage they are setting to humiliate our family publicly. They have already decided in Vaemond’s favor.” Rhaena smiled as Visenya reached over to her and grabbed her hand, squeezing it in hello. Muña's expression had twisted into one of anger and frustration and she turned away from the children so that they could not see the violent rage burn in her eyes at the realization that her enemies were going to rip her child’s inheritance away from him and spit on the memory of her late husband.

“We must carry on with our plan.” Kepa stated, his voice determined. “We come in, we make a statement, and we make it as had as possible for them to dismiss the case.” Muna had now turned back around, and her lip was caught between her teeth as she worried it. “Rhaenys still has her plan, and it is a good one. If we follow it, we have a good chance of coming out of this victorious.” He turned to Rhaena, passing Viserys off to one of the nursemaids before coming to place his hands on his daughter’s shoulders. “Are you prepared to fulfill your role in all of this?”

Fifteen-year-old Rhaena knew what was being asked from her. As the political landscape escalated- her name and her hand became great bargaining pieces for Rhaenyra and Daemon. Her name and her parentage were her greatest weapons. She looked up at Kepa and nodded. She nodded her assent for him to begin using her hand as a way to gain allies. She knew that unlike her sisters, she would not be marrying one of their brothers and that instead she would be married off to some high lord stranger who wanted her name and title.

But Rhaena loved her family more than anything and she was willing to sacrifice everything for him- including her hand in marriage- if it meant she bought more protection for them.

“I will do my part, Kepa.” She swore and she felt Visenya press to her side in solidarity and comfort. Kepa leaned down and kissed her forehead while Muna sent her a soft smile.

“Good.” Kepa nodded before turning to the twins. “And you?” Jace took Visenya’s hand into his own and the twins looked at one another before

looking back to Kepa and giving determined nods. (Rhaena knew that it would not be too difficult for them to do their part- things between the twins had begun to spark when they had turned sixteen and they only grew closer as they neared seventeen). But Rhaena also watched the smile on Visenya's lips go tight when Kepa looked away and she saw the way Visenya cast her gaze to the floor for a moment and knew that not all was fine. Kepa looked around the room at his family and nodded in satisfaction at the united front that was their family. "Alright, then we carry on with our plan and tomorrow we kill a snake."

Rhaena and Visenya often shared rooms- their chambers were connected back on Dragonstone which led to them often sneaking between their rooms late at night to whisper to each other in the dark of night.

Now they shared a room in the Red Keep, this time not even trying to hide their late-night activities. They gossiped about the different lords and ladies at court- laughing at the rumors about the youngest daughter of Lord Tully and how she had run off to marry a dornishman. As they gossiped Visenya helped Rhaena to do her hair, standing behind her sister and braiding her long locks into neat sections of braids- occasionally putting beads and jewels in the long braids much to Rhaena's delight.

"Lord Willem Tyrell is looking particularly dashing these days." Visenya noted, and it was true. The heir of Highgarden had grown into a fine man with brown curls and striking green eyes to match his regal features. Rhaena hummed appreciatively.

"Yes, he has. And he's only a year older than you." She told her sister as she picked out a red bead for the braid Visenya was working on.

"Perhaps we could arrange a match between you two." Visenya offered and Rhaena shrugged lightly.

“Highgarden is awfully far away from Kings Landing and Dragonstone. I wouldn’t be able to visit all of you so often.” She replied and Visenya gave a thoughtful nod.

“You’re right. It’d be better to find you a match closer to us so that we can visit all the time.” Rhaena laughed at her older sister’s clinginess.

“How about you?” Rhaena asked, meeting her sister’s eyes through the mirror that sat in front of her. “If everything goes according to Grandmother’s plan then you and Jace’s betrothal will be announced in court in the morning.” Visenya’s face took on a strange look that made Rhaena’s stomach twist in worry for her sister. Rhaena turned, halting her sister’s work and looked up at Visenya. “Does your betrothal not please you?” She asked, her voice quiet. Visenya looked away, refusing to meet her eyes and Rhaena watched as her sister’s hands clenched quickly before relaxing. Rhaena grabbed her sister’s hand and tugged on it, begging Visenya to turn and look at her. “Vis, please. Talk to me.” Visenya turned to face her indigo eyes gleaming with frustration and anger.

“It's not that it doesn't please me, because it does, I love Jace and cannot think of a better man to spend my life with, to rule with, to have my children with. It's just, I was born the same day as Jace, I lost out on the throne by mere minutes. But I spent years thinking that even if I didn’t have the Iron Throne, that I would still sit the Driftwood Throne. That I would still hold my own fate in my hands. Muña and Papa raised me to one day sit the Driftwood Throne for seven years. Seven. And then those weeks we were in Driftmark for the funeral happened and Grandfather made Luke heir over me. He pronounced Luke his heir and single handedly took my future from me.” Visenya choked out, her voice thick with the emotion of anger, frustration, and sadness. Rhaena gripped her hand harder, rubbing her thumb over Visenya’s hand to provide support and comfort. “I lost my father, my papa had always called me his heir, promising that one day I would sit at Driftmark as he would. But Papa was murdered, and Grandfather chose Luke over me. And now-” Visenya turned away for a moment, taking a fortifying breath. “And now I am to be betrothed to Jace and my power, my fate, my everything will come through my husband- and not myself. I will watch as he sits the Throne I lost out on by minutes and

watch as my younger brother rules Driftmark when it should have been me. It just doesn't feel fair. I am smarter than the both of them, and Kepa says I am a better warrior than them both as well and yet it does not matter. It's never enough." Every word she spoke was stilted, as if Visenya was struggling to find the strength to push each word out.

"Do you hate them all for it?" Rhaena asked quietly, already knowing the answer but asking anyways so that Visenya could express her feelings.

"That's what makes it so frustrating." The elder girl huffed, "I cannot bring myself to be angry with Jace or Luke. I can't bring myself to fault them or to lay blame at their feet. There is no one to blame but the gods for making me a second born child and a girl."

And that was the fate of the two girls who sat together on the giant bed. They were both second born. They didn't want for love or affection from their family but they were forever relegated to watching others take whatever they wanted while they simply had to stand there and accept their roles and what was given to them. The world was not kind to second born children, nor was it kind to daughters. Rhaena looked down at their clasped hands before looking back up at Visenya and she yanked her in for a bone crushing hug.

"You're never second best to me." Rhaena whispered into her sister's hair.

"Nor you to me." Visenya replied and they clung to one another a moment longer. They pulled apart and Visenya brushed one of Rhaena's braids behind her ear. "No matter what, you remain closest to my heart Rhaena." Visenya whispered. "You may not have a dragon, or be first born, or any of those things that make you feel lesser- but you will always be the one I love most." Tears began to spill over Rhaena's cheeks, and she felt a beaming smile threaten to crack open her face. She spent her entire childhood feeling outcast and lesser as Baela received lessons from Kepa, as Baela rode her own dragon, and then they had come back to Westeros and Rhaena had joined a family where everyone had their own dragon.

But Visenya had understood- Visenya who had watched her egg never hatch and had then gone on to claim the King of all dragons for herself. Visenya

who would always be a little less important than her brothers. Visenya who had spent the first seven years of her life feeling less than her brothers for never having her own dragon.

When they had been at Driftmark and they all mourned their late parents, Visenya had been someone who understood how Rhaena felt. She understood Rhaena's frustrations, Rhaena's longing. And they had bonded together, becoming a pair of twin flames- inseparable sisters whose hearts beat as one. Rhaenys and Visenya come again as Muna and Kepa liked to call them.

In the face of whatever was to come, Rhaena and Visenya would stand against it side by side.

A knock sounded on the door and they both wiped their tears and turned back to doing Rhaena's hair. When they had resettled, Visenya called for the visitor to come in. Kepa walked in, his doublet gone and just his shirt remaining, his hair untied and curtaining the sides of his face- clearly, he was preparing to retire for the evening.

"I've come to bid you goodnight." He said as he shut the door, walking over to their bed and looking over Rhaena's braids with a smile. She motioned for him to pick the beads for her next braid and watched as he pretended that this was the hardest decision he had ever made. After much deliberating he picked up glimmering gold beads and handed them to her. She grinned up at her father as he leaned down to press a kiss to her forehead. He then reached over to Visenya and pulled her in for him to do the same to her. "Try not to stay up to late girls. We must descend on this farce of a court by mid-morning."

"I'm almost finished, Kepa. I promise." Visenya swore, holding up the last section of hair she had left to braid as proof of her words to their Kepa. He nodded in approval and pressed last kisses to their heads before making his way to the door again.

“Where’s Muña?” Rhaena asked, wondering why she had not come to bid them goodnight with Kepa as she always did.

“She’s carrying out her part in your grandmother’s plan- she’s gone to beg the king for his help.” Kepa said, his eyebrows drawn together with unspoken worry- as if he was wondering if Rhaenyra could be successful or if the king's health was truly too far gone. He stood by the door before turning and calling a final goodnight to them to which they returned. “One more thing, Visenya.” Kepa turned his dark purple gaze on the elder girl with a raised eyebrow. “Try not to engage your Uncle Aemond in any more training yard fights.” Visenya had the good grace to blush and Rhaena’s mouth fell open at the revelation.

“Not even if I’m confident I can win?” Visenya asked, peeking a look back up to Kepa and his disapproving gaze melted into one of amusement and troublemaking.

“If you can win?” He repeated back at her, and she nodded. Kepa’s face broke into a sly grin. “Then take him down and knock him on his ass.” Kepa snickered and Visenya’s face split into a grin at that. He turned away after saying that. “Remember to come to your Muña and I’s rooms in the morning. We’ll break our fasts together and prepare for court.” He called as he left the room, hearing the affirmative hums that the girls gave in response.

It was a few hours later when Rhaena and Visenya finally lay side by side in bed, turned on their sides as they whispered to one another in the darkness. The beads in Rhaena’s hair gleamed in the moonlight and the girls giggled as they talked, enjoying just a few moments to be childish before they set out to battle the Greens. A suspicious creaking noise came from a dark corner in the room and Visenya’s head popped up from her pillow.

“What was that?” Rhaena whispered.

“I don’t know.” Visenya replied and Rhaena watched her sister’s hand slide over to grab the dagger that rested on her bedside table. Rhaena did not doubt her sister’s ability to defend them if they should be in danger but she still felt concerned.

“Should I get Ser Erryk?” She asked, fully prepared to make a break for their door to cry out for their Kingsguard.

“Wait a moment.” Visenya hissed and Rhaena pressed herself close to her elder sister. The corner creaked again and the sound of hinges opening and furniture scraping across the floor resounded through the room. Sudden illumination flickered from the spot.

Standing there was Baela, a robe tightly wrapped around her, and a candle held high in her hand as she stood at the entrance of the secret passage. The elder twin sister had a guilty look on her face as she took in the sight of Rhaena clinging to Visenya who clenched a dagger in her hand.

“Baela?” Visenya hissed out and Baela turned to shut the passage door behind her before shuffling towards their bed and set her candle down on the bedside table. She stood over them and sighed.

“I’ve been sleeping alone for two years. Can I spend the night in here?” She asked and Rhaena collapsed into giggles while Visenya scoffed at Baela before setting the dagger aside. Without saying a word, Visenya pulled the covers back and motioned for Baela to crawl into the giant bed. A luminous grin lit up Baela’s face and she removed her robe before climbing over them.

Her knee landed on Visenya’s stomach, and her hand dug into Rhaena’s thigh as she scrambled to find a fitting spot to sleep in the bed. Cries of outrage came from the two girls and Visenya began to push Baela off of her while whining out complaints. Rhaena’s laughing only escalated and she scooted to the side of the bed, making room for Baela to lay in the middle. Baela fidgeted for a few moments, trying to get comfortable and Visenya began to join Rhaena in her laughter. They laughed for a good while until they fell into silence, content to just be with one another.

“So, you fought Aemond in the training yard?” Rhaena finally asked and Visenya heaved a sigh while Baela let out a shocked gasp.

“Yes.” Was all the eldest said and the twin girls began to pile questions on her, but she only laughed and told them both to mind their business.

“What is he like?” Baela asked despite Visenya’s words.

“Arrogant, smug, overly confident in himself. He wears an eyepatch.” Baela decided not to mention the fact that some of those descriptions could be used to describe Visenya as well.

“Do you think you can beat him in a fight? Truly?” Rhaena asked and Visenya laughed that musical laugh.

“Oh I know I can.” She affirmed and the three girls began to laugh, going on the gossip more about the greens and about the court.

It took an hour for the giggles and the whispers of gossip to fade away and for the first time in two years, all three sisters fell asleep in the comfort of one another.

The twin girls fell asleep faster than Visenya did, content to all be together again and while Visenya found comfort in them as well, her mind was swimming- thoughts of her uncle plaguing her mind. Try as she might, she could not rid herself of the image of her fight with Aemond in the courtyard.

Visenya had spent ten years doing her utmost best to not think of the man who was once her closest friend. It had been too painful to think of him and to remember the traumatizing manner in which their friendship broke apart. Instead, she had thrown herself into anything else BUT thinking of him.

Visenya had spent hours in the training yard working herself to the point of exhaustion so that she could be a warrior worthy of her namesake and of Old Valyria. She had spent hours in the libraries, soaking up as much knowledge as possible- eager to learn and to prove herself. She had thrown herself into her relationships with her stepfather, bonding with him to the

point where she almost couldn't imagine any other man as her father, bonding with her brothers by blood and with her new sisters. Helping her mother during her labors with Aegon and Viserys and trying her best to bond with those new babes as well.

Visenya had done everything she could to keep Aemond as far away from her mind as possible and yet it was all undone in moments as she faced him in the courtyard. The memories of the fight the night he stole Vhagar flooded her mind. The anger, the hate, and the hurt she had felt by his actions piled over her once more and she felt herself drowning in the depths of her hate for her uncle.

Aemond Targaryen was the bane of her existence.

Aemond stalked into the pillow house that he knew Aegon frequented- he was furious, and he knew that taking out his anger on Aegon would make him feel better. He found the patron and demanded his brother's location and was quickly given it. He stormed up the stairs, his anger only building with each step before throwing open the door to the room his brother was occupying.

Aegon was entertaining a black haired, brown eyed whore who's moans of pleasure were very clearly faked but Aegon was dumb enough to believe. Aemond rolled his eyes as he took in the scene before picking up a cup and throwing it at Aegon, smacking his elder brother in the shoulder. Aegon let out an indignant cry, pausing in the middle of his thrust and turning around to look at him.

"Ah! Brother!" Aegon called. "Have you come to have some fun?"

"Get out." Aemond told the whore and she scrambled to pick up her robe before scurrying to the door. When the door shut Aemond stalked over to

his brother and threw a sheet at him for him to cover himself and then threw one of Aegon's shoes at him which was quickly followed by the other.

“Ouch. Stop that. Stop! Ouch! GODS DAMN YOU!” Aegon yelled as different objects were thrown at him, and he threw two of the cups back at Aemond in retaliation (missing by a good few feet) “What in the name of the gods is wrong with you?” Aegon asked as he wrapped the sheet around his lower half. Aemond shook his head in frustration, his hands clenching into fists as his teeth ground together.

“That fucking menace of a girl-” He snarled out, going on to mutter a long list of insulting adjectives under his breath. He failed to see Aegon’s eyes light up with that gods be damned troublemaker glint that meant he was about to make Aemond’s life a living hell.

“Are you perhaps referring to our niece?” Came to not so innocent question from the elder brother and Aemond growled at the mention of her. “What has she done now?” Aemond only scoffed under his breath and continued to list her long list of crimes to himself. Aegon let him go on for a few moments before growing bored and clearly looking to return to his whore. “It sounds like you need to work out some of your anger brother.” Aegon suggested before reaching over to grab a bell and shaking it loudly. A few seconds later the door opened, and five girls filed in. One girl was deeply tanned and had hair of the darkest black, one had hair of fiery red and skin so pale it was milk while another stood with her olive skin and brown hair. It was the final two that made Aemond want to strangle his brother. They had tanned skin, silver hair, and fine, elegant features. One girl had eyes of pale lilac and the other an odd shade of green. Lysene girls of Valyrian heritage. Aemond turned to look at Aegon who smirked at him. “Pick one brother and all your troubles will be forgotten.” Aegon declared, coming to stand by Aemond’s side and clapping him on the shoulder. Aemond just stood there for a moment- contemplating murdering his brother with his bare hands to satiate his rage. But on the other hand, Aegon had a point.

He turned to the girls and looked over them. Aegon gestured for the Lysene girls to step forward, but Aemond held up his hand to stop them, the last thing he wanted to do was stare down at a girl with Valyrian features as he

fucked her. Instead, he pointed at the brown-haired girl and walked out of the room, knowing that she would follow.

He kicks open the door to the room across the hall, waiting for her to enter and shutting the door with his foot when she did. She dipped into a curtsy before him and he twitched his fingers for her to rise.

“My Prince.” She murmured in a dulcet tone, and she reached over to him, pushing his cloak off his shoulder and reaching down to his breeches- beginning to unlace them for him. But he caught sight of the sly, seductive smirk that graced her plump lips and fury rose in him. It was a smirk that looked too familiar to the one that had been directed at him in the training yard as his niece taunted him.

Aemond's hand flew out and grasped the whore's wrist in a tight grip before he spun her and yanked her close so that her back was pressed to his front. His other hand came up to grip her chin and he turned her head to press a harsh kiss to her lips which she returned eagerly- moaning into it. He released her wrist and used that hand to tear her robe away from her chest, freeing her breast before bringing his hand up to fondle one of them, rolling and pinching her nipple in his fingers until it was peaked. She moaned desperately into the kiss and Aemond's frustration continued to grow. He released the girl and pushed her towards the bed and she scrambled onto it, eagerly awaiting him as he unlaced his leather training leathers.

He made his way to her and gripped her throat in his hand, bringing her up for another kiss while his other hand slid down between her legs to press up into her cunt, readying her to take him. He thrust his fingers up into her, scissoring them inside of her, opening her up and plying her loose and she cried out into his mouth, moaning out ‘My Prince!’ Aemond growled at the sound of her voice.

He removed his fingers from inside her and removed himself from the kiss, his hand still grasping her throat. He brought his other hand up and wiped her glistening arousal on her cheek. He sighed and bent down so that he was at eye level with her.

“I don’t want to hear a single word from you.” He snarled down at her and she nodded quickly. He removed his hand from her throat and spun her, turning her so she was on her knees before pressing her head down and into a pillow. He hiked her robe up so that it was bunched at her waist, exposing her cunt but also leaving her breasts out.

He took his cock into his hand, giving it a few quick tugs, and guided it into her, giving a shallow thrust- which was met with a moan- before harshly thrusting in, bottoming out and filling the room with the sounds of skin slapping on skin, the squelch of wet arousal and the moans of the whore. His own grunts joined hers and he continued to thrust into her, his anger at the early training yard fight only fueling him. He thought of that laugh and Visenya with her training leathers and braids woven with ribbons of black and red and his fury only increased. How she met him blow for blow, caused him to stumble, and how she met every taunt with one of her own.

He hated her, he loathed her and everything about her and he longed to wrap his hand around her throat and impress upon her just how much he hated her. The way she smiled at him like he was insignificant, the way she put her hand on Jace and Luke's arms, the way she laughed, the way she twirled her sword, the way she met him strike for strike, never faltering- he loathed it all. He loathed the day she was born, he loathed the day she claimed Vermithor, he loathed the day Laena fucking Velaryon had died and ruined their friendship with her death. He hated Laenor Velaryon for being murdered and driving them further apart. He hated everything about her and with every hateful thought, he gave a powerful thrust.

His thrusts continued and he felt the whore cum around him- her shrieks of pleasure and overstimulation filling the room and as she tightened around him Aemond gave a gasp. He thrust a few more times before pulling out and spilling himself on her back. He stood there and breathed for a moment, catching his breath before rolling the whore over so he could reach down and press a kiss of thanks to her cheek, before tucking himself back into his pants and re-lacing his pants. He backed away from the bed and swiped his cloak off the floor and brought it around his shoulders.

“Put it on my brother’s tab.” He called as he left the room and made his way out of the brothel. He stood on the street for a moment looking at the

silhouette of the Red Keep that was illuminated by the full moon. Inside the keep, somewhere deep inside Maegor's Holdfast, lay the bane of his existence- Visenya Velaryon.

"- and though it is the great hope of this court that Coryls Velayron survives his wounds, we gather here with the grim issue of the succession of Driftmark." Otto Hightower declared from the Iron Throne. "As the Hand of the King, I speak with the King's voice on this matter. The crown will now hear the petitions." the Hand declared, settling on the throne, looking altogether too comfortable there as he held court for the morning petitions.

"My lord Hand," Vaemon started, his voice full of outrage. "Princess Rhaenyra and her family could not even be bothered to show! I think that in itself speaks on the matter." It was true, Rhaenyra, Daemon, and all of their children were missing from the court- leaving the matter entirely to Vaemon and the Hightowers. Princess Rhaenys and Princess Baela as well as Queen Alicent and her children all stood on one side of the room with Vaemon- a clear declaration of their support of him and his petition.

"Be that as it may, the crown still asks that you make your formal petition." Hightower commanded with a sympathetic voice, waving for Vaemon to take the floor.

Vaemon nodded and moved to the center of the aisle. He began to make his claim, a speech about the long and ancient history of his esteemed house, detailing their ancestry of Ancient Valyria.

"Where House Targaryen rules the skies, we rule the seas!" He declared, continuing his long-winded declaration of his defense of the Velaryon bloodline, the purity of it that ran through his and his sons' veins. "What do Princess Rhaenyra and her children know of Velaryon blood?" He cried out to the hall, his voice was loud, filling the room and the Hand began to nod in his agreement. "The survival of my house is threatened, my queen. And I

promise you this, it is only through my blood- not that of the children of Princess Rhaenyra- that my house can be saved!" Murmurs of Agreement from the left side of the room sounded a clear mark of support for Vaemond from the Greens and their supporters. Aemond Targaryen's face took on a look of dark satisfaction, knowing that Lucerys Velayron was about to lose everything. Vaemond Velayron opened his mouth, ready to make his final statement and tear the Velayron inheritance away from Lucerys when the great doors of the hall opened, and the herald began to shout.

"Princess Rhaena of House Targaryen, the daughter of Prince Daemon Targaryen and Laena Velayron. Prince Joffrey of House Velayron, the son of Crown Princess Rhaenyra Targaryen and Prince Consort Laenor Velayron." Dressed in black and blue- representing her Targaryen and Velayron heritage came Rhaena, escorted by Joffrey who wore the silver and blue of his father's house. All attention turned to the doors and watched as the stepsiblings descended down the stairs and strode to the front of the room. Rhaena's hair was piled on the top of her head, giving the illusion of a crown and Joffrey had a silver circlet resting in his nest of brown curls. They came to stand at the front of the right side of the room and turned back towards the doors as if waiting.

"Prince Lucerys of House Velayron, the son of Crown Princess Rhaenyra Targaryen and Prince Consort Laenor Velayron. Heir to Driftmark and to the Driftwood Throne!" came the call and out walked Lucerys. Shining cloth of silver that was trimmed with the most elegant of blues formed the regal clothes of the fifteen-year-old heir as he strode to the front of the room by himself- presenting the image of a confident and self-assured heir. He did not pause to acknowledge his lady Grandmother or the Queen, instead coming to stand on the other side of Rhaena and turning to wait as well. Two Kingsguard appeared at the entrance of the hall and with them came the heirs- the eldest children of Princess Rhaenyra.

"Presenting Prince Jacaerys of House Targaryen, heir to the Iron Throne and future Prince of Dragonstone and her royal highness the Princess Visenya of House Velayron, the children of the Crown Princess Rhaenyra and Prince Consort Laenor Velayron."

Whatever attention the previous entries had grabbed, the entry of the twins grabbed more. Prince Jacaerys wore clothes entirely made of black and on his doublet were red dragons, embroidered alongside the silver seahorse of House Velaryon. At his side was a sword and, on his head, he wore a crown of black and silver. Next to him was his sister, the scion of House Targaryen. Her beauty shone through the room, eclipsing that of her stepsisters, her aunt, and that of the Queen. Atop her silver curls sat a golden diadem with red jewels and the red was the same, gleaming blood red that she was dressed in. Visenya looked every inch of her namesake, beautiful and dangerous her gown the color of blood with glittering onyxes and golden embroidering decorating the bodice and the skirt. In the very center of her bodice was the bronze image of Vermithor and embroidered flame around him, pronouncing for all to see that she was the rider of the mighty Dragon King. Her bodice was a bit low, showing just enough of her chest to gain attention but not be promiscuous. Jacaerys escorted her, her hand securely in his arm and they looked like an indomitable force. They walked past their uncles and aunt as well as the queen and neither of the twins spared the Greens a single glance. The message being sent by the Blacks was undeniable- they were above such proceedings and would only deign the hall with their presence when it most suited them- they were the power here. Not the Queen and certainly not the hand. It was only when Visenya and Jacaerys stood united with their siblings that Visenya's indigo gaze slid over to meet the violet eyes of Aemond.

Her look was one of smugness, complete arrogance and superiority as she met his gaze. A single eyebrow raised in challenge at him, and he was forced to bite the inside of his cheek to keep himself from sneering at her. Hate bubbled in both of their chests and his hand began to drift to rest on the pommel of his sword. That arrogance, that superiority and righteousness that he had last seen 10 years ago when she stood in the Hall of Driftmark and sided with her brothers against him, the look that had been matched with fury the day of her father's funeral. He hated that look, loathed everything about it and the way it made him feel when she looked at him that way. He wondered if it would be impossible for him to reach her and try to bring his sword down at her before anyone could try and stop him- just to make her stop looking at him like that. By the looks of it, her gaze wondered the same. (That cruel smirk that curled on his lips, the same one

he wore as he struck Baela and Rhaena, the same one he wore as he taunted Rhaena about a pig, the same one he wore as he strangled Luke and tried to bash Jace's head in, Gods Visenya loathed that look. She wondered if she could make it go away when she beat him the training yard one day).

Their gazes did not even leave one another as the arrival of Prince Daemon and Princess Rhaenyra was announced. Visenya's arrogant gaze and Aemond's hateful stare were only forced apart when Prince Daemon came to stand between them, blocking Visenya from Aemond's gaze. (Neither of them noticed the minute frown that came over Daemon's face when he noticed Aemond's glare before Daemon schooled his features back to neutrality. Neither of her brothers noticed, but Rhaena certainly did).

It took a few moments for the people in the hall to gather themselves, to recover from the surprise before Otto Hightower motioned for Vaemond to finish his statement. He stuttered for a moment, clearly trying to regain his thoughts before clearing his throat and continuing under the imperious and unimpressed gazes of Rhaenyra and her family.

"I place the continuation of the survival of my house and my line above all, I humbly put myself before you as my brother's successor. The Lord of Driftmark and the Lord of the Tides." Otto Hightower nodded the falsely imperious nod as he was wont to do and thanked Ser Vaemond for his petition before nodding at Princess Rhaenyra to take her place. Ser Vaemond turned to Princess Rhaenyra with a smug look but she never even deigned him with a look. Prince Daemon gave a very obvious roll of his eyes and a scoff before turning to whisper to the Princess Visenya. He muttered something at her and she turned to look at Ser Vaemond and gave a snide laugh at the man's expense- a laugh that sounded nothing like her usual one and was a sound that was harsh and cruel. Princess Rhaenyra in her dress of black, trimmed with red and embroidered with images of Syrax came to stand in the center and gave a sigh as if it was truly gracious of her to be there. (She hid her worry well, for that morning the family had sat as one and discussed the fact that their plan could go disastrously wrong as the king's health was truly disastrous. They had decided that they would have to win this battle by a sheer show of strength instead, praying to the Gods of Old Valyria that it would be enough to win).

“If I am to grace this farce with some answer, I will start by reminding this court that twenty years ago in this very-” but she could not finish, for the great hall doors opened once more. Visenya and Jaceys exchanged a look, not knowing who it was and wondering if this new intruder could be here to ruin them.

But standing there before them were the white and silver enameled knights of the Kingsguard and standing between them was the hunched figure of a man. Visenya inhaled sharply.

“King Viserys of House Targaryen, the First of his Name!” Shouted the Kingsguard, his voice ringing out and striking true in everyone, shocked faces coloring the room. “King of the Andals, and the Rhoynar, and of the First Men!” Princess Rhaenys’s expression was one of pure shock, one of love, and one of thankfulness as she watched her father struggle forward, step by step. “Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and the Protector of the Realm!”

King Viserys struggled down each step and everyone in the hall swept into a deep bow and curtsy as he huddled past. Rhaenys did not move an inch, her shock and joy keeping her frozen in place. Her father had come for her a final time. He had come to defend her, to protect her, and secure her and her children’s futures once more. Possibly days from death, suffering unimaginable pain, and struggling to simply stand or move and yet he was here for her. He had chosen to come for her, to push through his pain, rather than remain in bed numbed to the pain. She felt her throat close and the pricking of tears behind her eyes.

Vaemon, Otto, and the Queen all looked at one another, slight panic coloring their expressions. As Viserys passed his daughter and her children as well as his brother, they all swept into the lowest possible bows or curtsies, the fabrics of gowns and cloaks pooling on the floor beneath them in their obeisance. He paused and turned to look at his daughter- watching as she fought to keep her expression controlled and he nodded his head at her before giving her an attempt at a smile. He then looked past her, to his grandchildren and smiled at them as well. Visenya beamed up at her grandfather and she watched a soft look come over his expression.

He had come, Viserys had come and Rhaenys's plan would work. Viserys was here, he would decide for Rhaenyra, they would push Vaemond to lose his temper to the king and remove the poisonous snake from the nest of Driftmark.

"I must admit my confusion." The king's voice rang out, even in his weakness he commanded attention. "I do not understand why petitions are being heard over a settled succession. The only one present who might provide a keener insight into Lord Coryls's wishes is his wife, The Princess Rhaenys!" King Viserys then gave a slight gesture to the Princess and she stepped forward. A triumphant expression came over Vaemond and Otto's faces, so assured of their victory. Princess Rhaenys came to stand in the center of the room.

"It was ever my husband's will that Driftmark and the Driftwood Throne would pass-" She paused and sent a cold smile to Vaemond who returned it, sure that she was on his side. "Through Ser Laenor, to his trueborn son, the Prince Lucerys Velaryon." A look of sheer rage and fury overcame Vaemond as the princess betrayed him, making her way to stand beside Princess Rhaenyra. A matching rage rose inside Aemond at the realization that his mother and grandfather would not succeed and that the little bastard Lucerys would stand to lose nothing. "His mind never changed, nor did my support of him." Rhaenys declared and the King nodded in approval. "As a matter of fact," Rhaenys continued a now triumphant smirk on her face. "The Princess Rhaenyra has just informed me of her desire to marry her son the Prince Lucerys to Lord Coryls's Granddaughter, the Princess Baela Targaryen. In addition to that she has assured me that, to further tie together House Velaryon and House Targaryen the Prince Jacaerys Targaryen and the Princess Visenya Velaryon will marry as well." Queen Alicent shook her head at the proceedings while her father struggled to remain neutral looking. Beside her Helaena started to murmur something to herself while Aegon looked like he was trying not to laugh at the shocking twist. But it was Aemond his expression that no one could quite read that made Rhaena squeeze Visenya's hand and nod at Aemond. He looked frozen, whether it be with rage or something else but the look he was sending their family was one of pure and unadulterated loathing. It pulled a grin from Visenya's lips.

“The matter is settled then.” Called out the king. “Again. I hereby reaffirm the Prince Lucerys of House Velaryon as heir to Driftmark, the Driftwood Throne, and as the next Lord of the Tides.”

VaemonD looked over at the Blacks to see triumphant expressions, smug and arrogant smirks, as they reveled in their victory and his expression twisted.

“You break law and centuries of tradition to name your daughter as heir. Yet you dare tell me who deserves to inherit the name Velaryon. I will not allow this. Not in my House.” VaemonD declared, his voice shaking with rage.

“But it is not your House.” Princess Rhaenys spoke, calling the lord out on his clear ambition and want for Lordship. “The House Velaryon rests in my husband’s hands, and in mine at present by proxy. You are not the Lord, nor the Regent, nor the Heir. You have no say in how this House is run and you never will.” Her voice was one of sympathy, as she talked down to him as if he were some unruly child and VaemonD gave her an incredulous look, enraged by her tone and words. The King reminded VaemonD of his place but it was too late, the Velaryon was too far gone in his rage- succumbing to it entirely and forgetting who he was surrounded by. He was a weak snake, surrounded by mighty Dragons and he would fall.

“That is no true Velaryon and no true nephew of mine!” He shrieked, pointing his finger at Lucerys and Joffrey. He shrieked his family heritage for all to hear as he only dwelled further into the depths of madness at being denied. He spun on Lucerys once more, “Gods be damned, I will not see it ended on account of this-” He then hesitated, as if suddenly seeing he had gone too far. But it was not far enough, they needed him to push further if they were to justify their ridding of him. And so the Prince Daemon only smirked at him.

“Say it.” he whispered. “If you have some insult to say to the Princess’s sons, to *my* sons, then you should air your grievance for the court to hear.” Daemon continued, keeping his voice low in order to egg the man on, into his death. VaemonD shook, falling into their trap and he opened his mouth to yell.

“Her children are BASTARDS!” He screamed. “AND SHE IS A WHORE!” Aegon clamped a hand over his mouth to smother his laugh and a delighted grin came over Aemond’s face. The King rose and unsheathed his knife.

“I will have your tongue for this!” He wheezed out but it was too late. The sickening shink of metal sounded as it cut through flesh, bone, and brain, slicing the top half of Vaemond’s head clear off, leaving the bottom of his skull and his tongue attached to his body. The horrid sight and sound sent many flinching and trying to keep hold of their meal in their stomach as Prince Daemon stood there, triumphant and covered in blood.

“He can keep his tongue.” Was all he said before wiping his sword and returning to his palace beside his wife.

Aemond had gone to lunge forward when the Prince Daemon had brought his blade down on Vaemond, moving to protect his sister and mother if the Prince moved on them next. But when Daemon sheathed his sword, Aemond kept his hand on the pommel, just to be safe and his eyes flickered to the Blacks.

Rhaenyra and Daemon stood with grim satisfaction that was matched by Rhaenys, Baela, and Rhaena. Lucerys was wearing a look of slight nausea while Jace was hiding Joffrey’s eyes from the sight.

Aemond’s eye connected with Visenya’s and he saw it, the bloodthirsty and vengefully satisfied look on her face, as if the sight of Vaemond’s ruined skull had satiated some need she had to see his blood spilled. She gave him a small smirk one that spoke of a thousand feelings of hate, as if she were trying to tell him that what Daemon had done to Vaemond, so too would she do to him.

He felt that hunger, that fire of hatred burn bright in his stomach. By the gods he hungered to face her in combat again, he wanted to place his sword at her throat and rip out her eye as was done to him. He wanted her life, he wanted her scars, her eye, her life was his to claim and he would take it, and nothing would stop him.

A fire burned in both their stomachs. Aemond Targaryen's life was Visenya's to take. And Visenya Velaryon, her eyes, her breath, her soul, and her life, were Aemond's to claim.

Dragons Dance

Chapter Notes

I would have posted sooner but the storm here cut my wifi until now!

Anyways!!

I really loved writing this chapter because I am finally introducing conflict here! I hope you guys really enjoy it.

Visenya walked arm and arm with Jace, her hand tucked into his arm as they walked, Rhaena on her other side as they climbed the stairs.

“Otto Hightower’s face when Grandmother sided with us was priceless!” Visenya laughed triumphantly, the bell-like sound ringing down the hall and it was quickly joined by the deeper chuckle of her brother and giggle of her stepsister.

“Or their faces when the King came!” Rhaena suggested and the fit of laughter only increased.

“I never should have doubted that Grandmother and Kepa’s plotting would work. Kepa will never let me forget that I doubted him.” Jace bemoaned and his sisters nodded, they had all retained serious doubts of whether or not their plan to save their brother’s (and by virtue their own) inheritance.

“We all did, Jace.” Visenya replied, squeezing Jace’s arm in comfort. He brought her hand up to his lips, pressing a sweet and chaste kiss to it. The trio continued up the steps, Jace helping Visenya to lift her heavy, red satin skirts so she could traipse up the stairs. They reached the top of the stairs and Jace removed Visenya’s hand from his arm, bringing it up for another kiss before pressing another to her cheek at the corner of her mouth. He then leaned over and pressed a kiss to Rhaena’s cheek in a far more appropriate place than he had Visenya’s. Unfortunately for Jace, while

Rhaena and Visenya got to go spend the rest of the day before supper playing and enjoying their day, he had to attend his history lessons with Maester Gerarydes.

They watched Jace disappear down the hall before turning and going the other direction. They linked their arms and began their search for Baela so that they could carry out their plan for the day.

Baela had wanted to fly today and she had wanted them to fly all together. Vermithor had become fairly docile towards Rhaena as of late, as long as she was with Visenya. The highly intelligent dragon was able to register his rider's deep bond with Rhaena and he accepted her- to a certain extent.

"I hope you're not nauseous at all today!" Visenya laughed as they walked to their rooms so that they could change into their riding habits. "I think I'm going to see if Vermithor will do spinning today if he feels up to it!" Rhaena gasped, her eyes going wide.

"And we'll stay on?" She asked, her voice full of trepidation at the thought of falling from the mighty dragon.

"Of course we will!" Visenya reassured her. "The chains will keep us secure and Vermithor would never let anything happen to me- and since you're with me, you're safe too!" And it was true, Vermithor would never cause harm to his beloved rider, having only known one other rider in his existence, the King of the Dragons was deeply connected to his rider and he protected her fiercely.

They turned to go down the hall that their chambers resided in when they saw a tall, silver haired man leaning against the wall with one leg up. The girls came to a sudden stop when they saw the figure. His head slowly turned to the side and Visenya saw who it was.

Aemond Targaryen stood up from the wall, standing with one hand on his sword and the other resting by his side. He had one leg propped out to the side giving the appearance that he was completely relaxed and casual but Visenya saw his tells.

In all these years Aemond's tells of anger had remained the same the entire time. The way his shoulders were far too relaxed, the way he rubbed his thumb together with his fingers on his left hand while his fingers of his right hand clenched and unclenched in that subtle- almost unnoticeable manner. Visenya shifted, moving so that Rhaena was angled behind her- not wanting her little sister caught in the crossfire of her and Aemond's hate filled relationship.

"Niece. Princess Rhaena." Aemond greeted, his voice low- deep and rich but filled with a promise of violence and hate. She knew he was being deliberately difficult by not saying her name but saying Rhaena's but that was fine. Visenya could be just as difficult.

"Uncle." Visenya returned watching him with a disinterested expression although she was attuned to his every move and burned with the urge to start a fight with him. She fought to keep her voice calm and level but given the way Rhaena was pinching her, she was not as successful as she would have liked.

"Niece, we began a game the other day." He starts again, slowly beginning to make his way down the hall towards her. Visenya remains calm, she does not fear him. "A game we never got to finish." His voice only goes deeper as he continues to speak, he has such a smooth and dulcet tone- one she never thought he would when she imagined him as an adult. She felt the slight thrill down her spine at his words, at his tone, at the prospect of finishing their fight. She tilted her chin up at him, as he came closer and closer until he was standing right over, his presence invading her senses. Her gaze sharpened into a viscous glare but she kept her voice saccharine sweet as she spoke to him.

"I'm surprised that you want to play a game that you know you're bound to lose." She said back, ever so sweet, the image of a perfect and considerate Targaryen Princess. She watched his jaw clench as his anger became more visible and her sweet smile only widened, gaining a slightly sharp quality. The air was practically vibrating with tension between them and Aemond leaned down, putting his eye at level with hers as his gaze bored through her.

“I don’t lose, Princess. I haven’t lost a fight in ten years, and I don’t plan on ending that streak now. Or are you just making excuses because you’re afraid you cannot finish what you have started?” He was speaking so low that Visenya would be surprised if Rhaena who was right behind her could hear the words.

“Don’t worry Uncle,” She whispered, coming closer so that her mouth was practically touching his ear, dropping her voice to match his own. “I always finish what I start, and this is a fight I’ve been itching to finish for ten years.” She backed away from him after she finished speaking and watched his eye light up with hunger and she only smirked at him. “When the bells ring to announce the fourth hour of the afternoon I’ll meet you in the training yard.” She turned on her heel preparing to walk away when she felt a hand clamp down on her arm. Aemond spun her around to face him, his hand still gripping her arm and he yanked her close to him so that her body was pressed to his.

“Tread carefully, niece. You play with those much stronger than you.” He warned and she only smiled before slamming her heeled foot down onto his boot making him let out a harsh grunt of pain and release her in surprise.

“I cannot wait to press my sword to your heart.” Visenya called as she walked away, giving him a falsely flirtatious wave before turning on her heel and flouncing away with Rhaena.

Visenya stood behind Rhaena, unlacing the younger girl’s gown while Rhaena in turn did it to Baela. She helped yank the sleeves down off Rhaena’s arms and the fully loosens the corset of the dark colored gown. Baela yelped as Rhaena tugged on one of the pins in her hair before successfully tugging Baela’s pearl headpiece out of her hair. With Baela fully undressed- left only in her shift Rhaena turned to help Visenya out of her ornate gown and headpiece while Baela finished Rhaena’s dress.

Unlacing Visenya's gown turned out to be a two person job and both Rhaena and Baela worked together to free their sister from her cage of red satin. When the corset fell, joining the sleeves on the ground they began to unlace her skirts while Visenya lifted her hands to try and maneuver the pins that held her diadem.

She completely failed, only furthering in knotting her curls and she gave a cry of frustration before throwing her hands down, the diadem still firmly in place on her head. Baela laughed at Visenya's frustration and reached up to slowly try and detangle the curls and the pins.

It took what felt like hours but was most likely only minutes to finally get the diadem off but they did it. Often times the girls refused the help of Ladies maids to help them dress, instead choosing to relish their time with each other and help one another pick out their outfits. However when they were in a hurry or had important things to do that day- such as attend court to fight for Luke's inheritance- they would have their ladies dress them so as to save time.

Baela then reached over to where their Dragon Riding Habits lay on the great bed and tossed one to each of her sisters. They proceeded to yank the habits over their heads- always in a rush to finish dressing and get to their dragons- before pulling on their gloves. The black and red scaled outfits gave them the illusion of having dragon scales themselves and only furthering the godlike image of House Targaryen, the red undertones shimmering and giving the appearance of live fire.

Visenya then went over to help Baela to wrestle with her curls and tie her hair back while Rhaena bound her braids into one giant braid down her back before coming over and quickly weaving Visenya's curls into a similar, long braid.

"How large is Moondancer now?" Visenya asked as she finished tying off Baela's hair. She had not seen the baby dragon in 6 months and was rather curious to see how the dragon had grown. The last Visenya had seen, Moondancer's green scales were still pale as all baby dragons were and the dragon remained only a little bigger than Luke's Arrax

“Oh she’s almost as big as Vermax now! I wouldn’t be surprised if she surpasses him before too long! The green in her scales only grows more vibrant as well so I think she may have entered adolescence.” Visenya and Rhaena both shared a smile at their sister’s excitement to speak of her dragon and they wondered just how much Moondancer was eating for her to already be close to Vermax’s size- a dragon that was two years older than her.

Visenya thought about Dragon adolescence. She herself had never dealt with it- Vermithor already being over ninety years of age when she had claimed him- but she had watched Jace struggle against the adolescent temper and appetite of young Vermax, and she was thankful she never had to endure that.

Adolescent dragons were often defiant, prone to starting fights with one another and stealing food. They also had a tendency to defy the occasional order from their rider and cause as many problems as possible. When Uncle Aegon was younger and Sunfyre had gone through adolescence he had eaten two of the dragon keepers in a fit of defiance. It had only served to make Visenya a little more thankful that she had no dragon at the time.

“Hopefully she doesn’t eat any of the Keepers.” Visenya joked lightly and Baela laughed.

“Gods I hope not! I hope she sticks to the normal things- stealing the food of others and refusing to fly because she would rather rest.” The sisters all laughed, recalling the time that Jace had mounted Vermax for an afternoon flight, only for the dragon to lay down and refuse to move before falling asleep.

Rhaena pulled open their chamber door and the trio began to make their way down the halls and to the courtyard where their wheelhouse awaited. They filed in one by one and sat on the plush seats side by side before pulling one of the soft furs over them.

“Did you hear that Silverwing has made her nest on the Dragon Mount with Vermithor?” Rhaena asked Baela as the wheelhouse rumbled down the road. “She flew to Dragonstone to find him and they have resumed their

nesting.” It was common knowledge that Silverwing and Vermithor were mates with a bond so deep that it was hard for them to be away from one another. Silverwing had flown to Dragonstone after her nearly decade long separation from Vermithor and they had rejoined once more much to Kepa’s delight as he speculated that Silverwing would soon bring a clutch- she was the mother of Sunfyre, Vermax, and Moondancer and everyone hoped for another healthy clutch of eggs.

“She has?” Baela exclaimed, thrilled to hear of the reunion of the century old dragons who were the dragon equivalent of a love story. “Vermithor must be so content! He has a rider and his mate!” Visenya laughed, Vermithor had indeed been very content. As her bond with her dragon deepened and furthered, she and Vermithor’s emotions only blurred more and more together until they both felt what the other did- sharing pain, joy, and a host of other emotions. This meant that Visenya had been receiving a rather large amount of feelings of contentment from down her bond with Vermithor.

“Yes, he is very happy. He and Silverwing have taken to flying around the island together. She’s a beautiful dragon and I love flying with her and Vermithor!” Visenya shared making Baela coo in happiness at the story of the two old dragons.

The rumbling of dragons grew louder and Visenya peered out of the wheelhouse to see the horses pulling them into the entrance of the Dragon pit. The wheelhouse came to a stop and the door opened, their Kingsguard holding out his hand to help the three princesses down and they gladly accepted. Baela exited first, her excitement to see Moondancer was ever so powerful and she left Rhaena and Visenya to follow behind her.

Baela was right, Visenya noted as they made their way into the pit. Moondancer had grown quite a bit, Vermax would definitely have some competition- which was truly astounding considering Vermax was a dragon of seventeen years as opposed to Moondancer’s thirteen. Moondancer was a dragon of the softest shade of green mixed with pearlescent white that sometimes gleamed a pale pink in certain lights. Her head was a bit on the more elongated side, much like Muna’s Syrax. Moondancer also boasted two large, pointed green horns on either side of her skull. The she-dragon

had caught sight of Baela and eagerly began to make her way towards her ride, causing Rhaena and Visenya to smile softly at the clear bond between the two.

The dragon trilled her excitement as she and Baela made contact and only grew louder in her happiness as Baela began to run a loving hand over the green scales as she whispered soft words in Valyrian of her love for her mount.

But it was the sight of Vermithor who quickly stole Visenya's attention away from her sister and the younger dragon. Vermithor was over on the side of the pit, shaking his head stubbornly and ruffling his wings as the Dragon Keepers tried to shout orders at him. Visenya understood the problem- ten years of freedom, no chains and no pit, as well as having a rider now meant that he was loyal to only her and that he was not likely to endure the pit for much longer or to obey any commands from the Keepers. She quickly jogged over to him, Rhaena following behind her and Visenya began to call out to the keepers.

“Henujagon zirȳla sagon. Ziry iksos sȳz. Nyke jāhor gūrogon zirȳla hen kesīr.” Leave him be, he is fine, I will take him from here. She commanded and the keepers bowed before slowly backing away from the enormous dragon. “Vermithor!” She called out in a happy tone and the dragon began to snort and rumble at her. But she knew what these rumbles meant- this was not a sign of his unhappiness or defiance as the other ones had been. No this was his happy greeting to his rider; he was happy to see her and knew that she would ensure that no others tried to command him. *“Issa jorrāelagon, skorkydoso glaesā?”* My love, how are you? She asked him her voice soft and gentle as she reached out and began to stroke his gleaming bronze scales. He trilled at her words and a smile came over her face before she leaned in, pressing her forehead to his nose and she closed her eyes in contentment, reveling in their bond and knowing that he was doing the same. In the background she registered the sound of Baela speaking the Valyrian word *Dohaeris* to Moondancer, calling the young dragon to serve.

Visenya did no such thing with her own. Vermithor was a mighty beast, already large and powerful well before Visenya had claimed him. He had

been to war in his adolescence and besides Dreamfyre and Vhagar, he was the only living War Dragon left (for while Caraxes had seen war, he did not truly count yet) as Vermithor had risen in defense of King Jaehaerys in the later years of Maegor the Cruel's reign. He was no pet to command to obey her, no, he was a mighty creature with a powerful and intelligent mind of his own. Her bond with him was one of mutual love and respect, a bond of understanding that he had allowed her to mount him, that just as she chose him, he had chosen her to ride him and care for him as he had chosen her to love and protect.

Visenya was well aware of just how powerful and dangerous Vermithor was, and she was under no illusions that she would ever fully control him. However she didn't need to. As long as they had their bond of understanding- of love and respect- a truly symbiotic relationship, he would always follow, love, protect, and obey her.

Rhaena came to stand beside her and with Visenya's hand over her own, she pressed her palm to Vermithor's scales and they waited to see if he would accept her presence today. He snorted and huffed before pressing his head into her palm- he was alright with Rhaena being there today. Rhaena's face split into a beaming smile and Visenya returned it, whispering a quiet thank you to Vermithor- knowing that he sensed and understood Visenya's love for Rhaena and so he in turn shared affection for the girl.

"Issi ao bē naejot sōvegon, issa jorrāelagon?" Would you like to fly today, my love? She asked Vermithor, already knowing that he would be thrilled to go out again. He ruffled his wings out and she nodded her head, understanding his excitement. It took a few minutes to climb all the way up into Vermithor's saddle and then have Rhaena join her, Baela having already been saddled for a few minutes by the time Visenya, Rhaena, and Vermithor were ready. "Ready?" She called out to Baela and she felt Rhaena grip her waist tightly.

"Ready!" Baela called back and Visenya leaned down to pat Vermithor on the back, knowing that he was just awaiting the command from her mouth.

"Sōvegon Vermithor!" Visenya cried and he let out a mighty roar, shaking the earth beneath him as he began to take mighty steps to build speed, his

wings beginning to flap to support him. Then with a great heave and a mighty lurch, he launched into the sky causing Visenya and Rhaena to have to hunch down in order to avoid getting whipped in the face by the gust of wind caused by his take off.

Behind them, Visenya heard a much quieter shriek as Moondancer took to the skies as well. The young dragon flapped her wings, eagerly trying to catch up to the older one in front of her. Visenya pulled on one of the ropes, urging Vermithor to go as low as he could to buzz the tops of the buildings in King's Landing, laughing at the thrill of it while Rhaena shrieked with happiness. Vermithor then pulled up, wings flapping mightily as he forced them up into the clouds.

"Are we going to do rolls?" Rhaena yelled into her ear and Visenya nodded, hopeful that Vermithor felt up to it. She leaned down, patting his scales again before shouting the command to roll at Vermithor. He let out another roar- one Visenya knew was a good sign- and tucked his wings.

They began to spiral, going into what Kepa called a 'Death Drop' where the dragon spiraled lower and lower to the ground and only pulled up right before it was too late. It was a trick many dared not to do with their dragons because it required complete trust but after 10 years of training in the skies, bonding, and partaking in mock battles in the sky, Vermithor clearly felt up to sending them into the Death Drop. Rhaena screamed in Visenya's ear and Visenya laughed a maniacal and delighted laugh as Vermithor continued to drop closer and closer to Blackwater Bay.

"OH MY GODS!" Rhaena screamed and Visenya continued to laugh. Suddenly Vermithor's wings shot out and he pulled out of the spiral, going into a glide having pulled himself level. His claws skimmed the water of the seas and the tips of his wings dragged in the water, causing ripples.

In that moment Visenya had never felt so content and so close and bonded to her beloved dragon. She felt his love for her, and she returned it tenfold. (She felt Rhaena's chest go up and down as she began to laugh, and she knew that in that moment she had to find Rhaena a dragon).

Aemond sits in the training yard, ten minutes before his fight with Visenya and sharpens his sword as he sits and waits. He contemplates just how he wants this fight to go. Part of him wants it to end with her bloody and screaming, part of him desires it to end with his hands around her throat, and the other part wants the fight to end with her agreeing that he is better than her in every way.

He walks around the yard, rolling his shoulders and moving his head from side to side to loosen his neck, knowing it's best to not let himself get too worked up or tense. He set his stance and gave a few practice swings of his sword.

The bells of the city tolled for the mid-afternoon and he felt his shoulders tense up immediately, despite his best attempt to not. Ser Criston was leaning against the outer walls of the training yard and raised an eyebrow as the bells finished tolling and his niece did not enter the courtyard. Aemond felt anger begin to bubble in him at the idea that she had backed out and dared to not finish their fight but then a bustle of activity sounded and a laughing Visenya Velaryon appeared at the top of the steps that led down into the training yard, flanked by her step sisters.

The trio descended the steps giggling with one another, all wearing sets of red and black training leathers with swords hanging by their sides. Baela's eyes flickered over to meet Aemond's and a smirk came over her lips before she leaned to whisper in Visenya's ear. Visenya's gaze flickered up to meet Aemond's before she turned back to Baela and burst into loud laughter.

Aemond's fury rose as the girls came to stop before him and as his niece handed off her cloak to Rhaena. She sent him another sly smile and pulled her sword out of its scabbard before removing the scabbard from her waist and giving the sword a few test swings.

"It is quite rude of you to be late." He called out in a voice full of barely restrained anger.

“I do apologize, however I was at the Dragonpit with Vermithor and it does take a while to make it back to the Keep.” Visenya retorted, keeping her tone in that calm and level tone that he hated. He had watched as she buzzed King’s Landing on Dragonback so he knew she was being truthful but it did nothing to make him feel less angry.

“It is also rude to not curtsey before your betters.” He sneered at her and she gave him a look that made it seem that she was speaking to a rather slow child.

“Then it should be you doing the curtsying Uncle. For I am the one that is third in line to the throne while you-” she paused and looked him up and down with an expression of false sympathy. “You are so far from the throne I cannot even count how many stand between you and it.” His fists clenched and Baela gave a mean yet delighted laugh at Visenya’s words. Aemond only gave a mocking bow before holding his sword out in a clear challenge.

“Shall we dance, niece?” He asks with a cruel smirk and she returns it with one of her own as she walks to the center of the training yard.

“I’d be delighted.” She replied.

Aemond was on her like a flash, bringing his sword down as hard as possible, pouring all of his hate into the first strike and she met it with ease that only frustrated him. The impact of their swords only served to widen their smirks and the eyes of the observers. With a quick rotation of the wrist Aemond is able to slide his sword down hers and spin away.

They circle one another like hungry, raging dragons before Visenya moves as quick as a flash, bringing her own sword down this time and their fight starts again. He parried the strike before swinging his sword low, at her knees in a cheap shot causing her to quickly hop out of the way. He lets out a mocking laugh and she straightened up, going in for another hit.

She spun the sword across her wrist and through her fingers to put it into a reverse grip before making an aggressive slash at his chest that managed to nick his leathers and cause him to fall back with a heaving breath. He is

quick enough however to catch her side with the flat of his sword, causing her to lose all her breath and have to quickly suck in another.

He snarls at her and she returns it, baring her teeth. They swing at each other at the same time and their swords come to a cross which drew the two of them in so close that they could taste the breath being exhaled by the other, their hate for each other bouncing around them and only serving to further the tension between them as they came to a cross.

Their swords slide apart and Visenya swings, her sword flying only a few inches from Aemond's neck as he quickly ducks back to avoid having his throat slashed open. The fight only continues, blow after blow and parry after parry, their hate for one another causing them to make dirty fighting maneuvers in the hopes of defeating the other. She strikes once more and almost catches him in the arm, but he stops her at the last second before twisting his blade and causing the two swords to dip and spin, making Visenya huff in frustration.

"I thought you'd be a better fighter than this, Uncle." Visenya called and he swung low only for her to meet his strike, shoving his sword away and making a stab at his chest that he parries away, and they whirl away from each other from the force of the rebound of the hit.

"I find myself rather disappointed in you as well." He shot back and she only grinned at him before twirling her sword and settling down into her stance. The fight continues, his blade meeting hers in a dance as they fight to gain power and ground over the other, but they are too evenly matched. For every strength of his there is one for her- they fight too similarly, and their moves only complement one another. That is until he manages to swipe her feet out from under her, sending her flying onto the ground and her sword out of reach. Triumph fills him as he comes down on top of her, straddling her waist and bringing his sword to her throat when he feels it.

The sharp tip of a dagger is pressed into his leathers, piercing through them and digging into his skin, already drawing minute amounts of blood as Visenya lays there, inches away from piercing his chest and killing him. He feels his hand holding the sword to her throat falter for a moment at the bloodthirsty grin on her face as she lay beneath him. A mix of emotion rises

in him and he presses his sword harder but her smile only grows and she pushes her dagger a little deeper.

“Shall I cut out your heart?” She whispered from beneath him, her silver hair wound in its braid splayed on the ground under her and wispy curls of it stuck to her forehead, gleaming with that ancient Valyrian beauty as she dug her blade into his leathers right above his heart- his blade to her throat not impacting her ability to speak at all. He looked down into her eyes and his heart clenched. ‘You already did.’ He thought with utter hatred before ripping himself away from her and storming out of the training yard, leaving Visenya on the ground with a victorious expression on his face as he practically conceded to her (although there was an undercurrent of anger in herself as well at the fact that she and Aemond could not defeat one another).

Frustration and Anger were his companions as he wondered how even in combat, they were so evenly matched against one another.

He found himself thinking of the image of her pinned beneath him, sweaty and glowing as she challenged him, her eyes sparkling and he wondered what that awful, nauseating ache he felt in his stomach was before settling on the fact that it was just the weight of his sheer loathing for her existence. He wondered why a part of him longed to return to her and challenge her to yet another duel, desperate to feel that fire he had felt when he faced her once more.

Visenya sat there for a moment, watching him walk away and wondered why she hadn't felt the relief and satisfaction she thought she would when she had dug her blade into his heart. Wondering why it did nothing to ease the pain and sadness in her heart and those loathsome aches in her chest and stomach when her mind flashed to Aemond. Her hate for him was so strong- yet why did she feel so unsatisfied as he walked away.

To say that the atmosphere of the family dinner was tense would be perhaps the greatest understatement in the history of humankind. On one side of the table next to where the king would sit was the Queen Alicent with her father beside her. Aemond sat at the end of the table and on the next side of the table sat Helaena and beside her, her brother-husband Aegon.

Next to Aegon sat Jacaerys, an empty seat, Rhaena, and Joffrey. At the end of this side was Lucerys and Baela and the Crown Princess and her husband sat on the other side of where the king would sit. The only missing family members were Prince Daeron who was in Oldtown, Aegon and Helaena's children, the younger children of Rhaenyra and Daemon, the King, and Princess Visenya.

Quiet conversation could be heard as each side conversed within themselves. The queen talked with her father, Aemond with Helaena, and Aegon talked to himself as he drank.

"You drink too much." Aemond spoke to Aegon and Aegon shrugged before pointing a drunken finger at Aemond.

"Or maybe you do not drink enough." Aemond rolled his eyes and turned back to Helaena, pointedly ignoring Aegon as well as refusing to allow himself to look at his missing niece's empty seat. The doors opened and everyone rose to their feet as the king was carried in on a grand chair. Behind him followed the Princess Visenya in a dress of softest blue and white and her hair now falling in its soft unrestrained curls. She came to stand beside Jacaerys and he pressed a kiss to her hand to which she smiled before uttering words of apology to her mother and the other attendants of the dinner.

"I apologize for my tardiness! I was reading to Grandfather and we got lost in the story and forgot all about the hour." Jace beamed at his sister and Daemon shook his head fondly at the girl while Rhaenyra assured her that it was quite alright. Her eyes flicked over to meet Aemond's from over Aegon's head and he narrowed his eye at her to which she only smiled. The room filled with obvious tension as everyone waited for the king to speak.

“How good it is to see you all tonight, together.” The king wheezed out and his grandchildren all gave him soft smiles.

“Prayer before we begin?” The queen asked and Viserys nodded his assent leading everyone to bow their heads except for Prince Daemon, Princess Visenya, and Prince Aemond. Prince Daemon worshiped the Gods of his Ancestors (as did Visenya and the rest of their family. And secretly and surprisingly so did Prince Aemond) and so he refused to bow his head in supplication to the Faith, instead choosing to roll his eyes and mutter under his breath as the Queen prayed for Ser Vaemond’s soul. Visenya and Aemond continued to stare at one another, only looking away when the prayer finished and Jace’s head rose, coming to block Visenya’s view of Aemond. “This is an occasion for celebration, it seems.” the King declared and Princess Rhaenyra nodded in agreement. “My beloved grandsons Jace and Luke will marry Visenya and Rhaena to make a match that brings so much happiness to my heart and further strengthening the bonds of our houses.” Baela and Visenya traded smiles as did the boys. Visenya did not see Aemond’s expression darken as he continued to stare through Jace and at her. “A toast to the young princes, and to their betrothed, my precious Visenya and the Princess Baela!” Viserys called and everyone picked up their cups before Prince Daemon gave a hearty ‘hear, hear’ that very clearly grated on Otto Hightower’s nerves. Aegon leaned over and began to whisper to Jace, loud enough so that most of the table could hear (except for the decrepit king).

“Well done Jace, you’ll finally get to lie with a woman,” Aegon’s eyes then ran over Visenya’s form appreciatively “and a fine Valyrian woman at that.” Visenya rolled her eyes and Jace’s fist tightened around his goblet. No one noticed that Aemond’s did the same at those words. The king continued to toast to Luke the confirmed heir of Driftmark and under the table Rhaena squeezed Visenya’s hand as her gaze darkened for a brief moment- a moment that her father noticed from across the table and his eyebrows drew together. Everyone took another awkward drink together and Aegon put his arm on Jace’s chair, clearly determined to be as obnoxious as possible. “You do know how the act is done, I assume? At least in principle?” Aegon kept his voice low but most everyone still heard it. “Where to put your cock and all that?” and Jace continued to stare ahead, his gaze as hard as stone.

“I do believe that is enough, uncle.” Visenya warned Aegon and he only shot her a mischievous smile (one that promised trouble as she remembered it all too well from her childhood.)

“You play the jester all you wish, but you will hold your tongue before my betrothed.” Jace muttered harshly to Aegon before taking Visenya’s hand into his own. Aegon only shrugged as if he did not care. Anything else that he was going to say was cut off as the King struggled to his feet.

“It both gladdens and fills me with sorrow to see you all here at this table, the faces that are the most dear to me in all the world. That have grown so far apart in these past years.” Jace and Luke’s eyes flickered over to Aegon and Visenya’s met Aemond before quickly looking away. The king then reached up and pulled away his golden mask to reveal the true look of the right side of his face.

It was a grotesque almost skeletal sight, all the flesh gone revealing the bone, ligaments, tendons, and remnants of muscle that were left. His eye was completely gone and he looked half man half corpse. Joffrey quickly looked away from the sight. “My own face is no longer a handsome one, if indeed it ever was but tonight I wish you to see me as I am. Not just a king, but your father, your brother, your husband, and your grandsire who may not, it seems, walk for much longer among you.” At those words Visenya gripped Jace’s hand harder and bit the inside of her cheek to force away the tears that threatened to build at the thought of her beloved grandfather’s death- the man who had given her those beloved Dragon carvings she had collected in her room- her collection now ranging from Balerion all the way to Jace’s Vermax. She could not bear the thought of losing him. “Let us no longer hold ill feelings in our hearts, the crown cannot stand strong if the House of the Dragon is divided, let us set aside our differences. If not for the crown, then do it for the sake of this old man, who loves you dearly!” He cried out and everyone took on uncomfortable and sad faces. The king gave a defeated sigh and fell back into his chair as the silence in the room continued and everyone simply stared at one another.

Jace cleared his throat while Visenya refused to lift her gaze to see the face of her once most closest friend. Viserys’s breaths filled the room as he struggled to breathe before a chair suddenly scrapped on the floor and

Princess Rhaenyra rose. She picked up her goblet and turned in the direction of the queen. They all held their breath and stared, waiting for her to speak.

“I wish to raise my cup to Her Grace, the Queen.” Visenya, Jace, and Rhaena’s heads all snapped from looking at their mother to the queen just in time to see her shocked face. “I love my father, but I must admit that no one has stood more loyally by his side than his good wife.” They watched the queen’s expression soften and Princess Rhaenyra continued. “She has tended to him with unfailing devotion, love and honor. And for that she has my gratitude,” the princess hesitated before finishing. “And my apology.” She sat down quickly, as if afraid the Queen would say something terribly rude.

“Your graciousness moves me deeply princess,” the Queen whispered. At her words Daemon leaned forward and Rhaenyra turned to look at her with surprise. “We are both mothers and we love our children. We have more in common than we sometimes allow.” The queen stood and the gazes of the very surprised children of the feuding mothers followed her. “I raise my cup to and your house. You will make a fine queen.” Rhaenyra’s eyes widened slightly and her mouth parted minutely. Everyone raised their glasses in toast of her before Rhaena leaned over to whisper in Visenya’s ear. Conversation rose once more and Aegon drained his cup and Aemond watched as his older brother stood and made his way around Jace to Visenya.

“I regret the disappointment that you are soon to suffer, Visenya.” Aegon muttered. “But if you wish to know what it is like to be well satisfied, all you have to do is ask.” Jace slammed his hands down on the table in frustration but Visenya just looked up sweetly.

“If I ever wish to learn how to fake my pleasure in bed, I’ll be sure to ask your whores, Uncle.” A look of surprise came over Aegon’s face and suspicious coughs came from Rhaena, Baela, Luke, Helaena, and perhaps even Aemond. Jace was still breathing heavily and Visenya reached to tug on his sleeve. “Jace.” she murmured and watched as Aemond rose to meet Jace.

Jacaerys and Aemond stared at each other, one with nervousness and the other with hate. Aemond's gaze flickered almost imperceptibly down to Visenya only to find her staring up at Jace. Aemond's unmoving stare bored into Jace's face. Jace picked up his goblet and held it aloft.

"To Prince Aegon and Prince Aemond. We have not seen each other in many years but I have fond memories of our shared youth." As he said fond memories his stare met Aemond's- as if to call to memory the thousands of pranks that Jace and Aegon had once pulled on young Aemond. "And as men I hope we may be good friends and allies. To you and your family's good health, dear uncles." He toasted and drank, everyone following suit and then he proceeded to lay a not so playful punch to Aegon's shoulder which caused the Prince to wince and emit a grunt.

"To you as well." Aegon returned in a monotone voice and Visenya cracked a smile at the expression of distaste on his face. When Jace sat, Aemond slowly sat as well, knowing that it would no longer be acceptable to remain standing.

"Beware the beast beneath the boards." Helaena muttered and Aemond turned to her with a concerned look while Aegon rolled his eyes.

"Well done my boy." Exclaimed the king, ever so proud and loving of his grandchildren. Helaena suddenly stood and Aegon tried to tug her back down but she refused before lifting her cup.

"I'd like to propose a toast as well. To Visenya and Baela!" Aegon buried his head in his hands. "They'll be married soon. It isn't so bad, mostly he just ignores you." She paused as if thinking before starting again. "Except sometimes when he's drunk." Daemon let out a cackle of laughter while Luke snickered. Visenya's smile only grew and she gave a thanking nod to Helaena before snickering at Aegon's clearly embarrassed face. Daemon continued to chuckle under his breath until Rhaenyra nudged him- all of their children now wearing amused faces. Aemond took in the smile on Visenya's face, studying it and noting that it had only enhanced the Valyrian Beauty on her face. He felt that nausea roil in his stomach once more as he took in her beauty.

She wasn't looking at him now, instead she was laughing while she spoke to her stepfather, giggling at some joke he had told that had all the children in fits of laughter.

"Let's have some music!" The king called and the musicians began to play a few cords as they warmed up. Jace stood and pressed a kiss to Visenya's cheek before making his way over to Helaena and offering her his hand, silently asking her to dance. Aegon watched with surprise, as if he couldn't believe anyone would want to dance with Helaena while Aemond glared at him for allowing their nephew to take Helaena's hand. Aegon only shrugged at his brother before wagging his eyebrows in that way that spelled trouble. Aegon then stood and walked over to Visenya holding his hand out to her and giving her a mock courteous bow.

"My dear Princess Visenya, would you do me the honor of sharing a dance with me?" Visenya's eyes shot over to Aemond who's fist now clenched his silverware so tight that it had started to bend and he glared so horribly at her and Aegon. Smiling and looking back at Aegon, Visenya placed her hand in his and stood, walking out onto the floor with him.

Her blue silk skirts spilled around her as if she were wearing a dress made of liquid and together she, Aegon, Jace, and Helaena began the dance of the dragons. Aemond turned in his chair to watch them, horrified at the sight of his brother dancing with the Velaryon Princess and bitterness only filling his mouth as he thought of how she had looked in the Great Hall when her betrothal was announced. Victorious. In Love. As if Jace was everything she ever wanted and like there wasn't ever a time when she had looked at him the same way. A time where she had shunned Jace for him only to now wrap herself around Jace's arm and press kisses to his cheek.

Aemond kept a watchful eye on them, watching as the two couples spun around one another and a few of the family members 'oohed' and clapped. Aegon spun Visenya around and they both began to laugh- as if forgetting that they had a generally antagonistic relationship normally. They then joined hands and circled one another and Aegon whispered something that must have been the funniest godsdamned joke ever made for the delighted laugh that Visenya gave. Aemond stood sharply, shoving his chair back and stormed over to them before placing his hand on Aegon's shoulder.

“May I cut in?” He bit out, making it clear that it was not really a question and Aegon grinned at him before stepping aside, allowing Aemond to pick up in his place of the Dance. Visenya’s smile faded immediately as he helped to spin her around, her blue silk skirts swishing along his black leather of his training outfit. “You are not pleased to dance with me?” He sneered at her and her eyes flashed in anger.

“I was having a perfectly fine time with Aegon.”

“Those are words no one in their right mind has ever said.” Aemond muttered and he watched as she fought to keep a slight smile off her face before her expression hardened again.

“You left our fight awfully fast,” Visenya whispered up at him as their bodies pressed close before they spun apart. “Upset that you were evenly matched with a girl? Or is it that it was me?” Aemond pulled her hand a little too hard as they completed the next steps, and she only dug her nails into his wrist in reply. They did not speak as they carried out the next steps, instead focusing on the dance and staring one another down- that fire Aemond had felt in the fight earlier returned to him, lighting through his veins and filling him. She spun close to him, and his hand slid across her waist slowly before he then placed both his hands on either side of her waist and lifted her into the air.

Her scent filled his nostrils, the soft smell of peaches invading his senses as a mix of blue silk and soft, golden-brown skin filled his gaze. Her hands were planted on his shoulders as he spun her in the air, and he heard the small laugh she let out and a tiny feeling of satisfaction hit him. He brought her down from the spin, bringing her close into his arms and they circled one another three times, the air between them charged with some unspeakable feeling as her dark gaze never strayed from his. They then separated and performed the final bow with their arms spread out to mimic wings.

For a moment the world faded away and nothing else existed to Aemond except for that glowing tone of gold-brown skin, silver hair, indigo eyes, and soft blue silk. Her lips curled into a tiny smile and he felt his own quirk up in a smirk and for just a second he longed for the music to start again so

that they could dance once again. However resounding clapping filled the air and the moment was broken and both of them seemed to realize exactly who it was they had danced and shared a moment with, the smiles and the softness was gone and it was quickly replaced with self disgust. Their smiles turned down and their gazes sharpened to glares. Visenya dipped the barest curtsy possible before returning to the table, sitting herself next to Aegon and picking up a conversation with him.

Aemond slunk back to his seat and sat, forcing himself to look away from the image of Rhaena and Visenya laughing with Aegon to the scene of Helaena and Jace beginning a new dance. The king soon departed, the pain of his existence becoming too much for him to bear. However the good will did not depart with him and the two sides of the table continued to converse, the Queen and Rhaenyra laughing together, Luke, Joffrey, and Baela talking with Daemon, and Visenya and Rhaena laughing with his elder brother.

Aemond turned his gaze to the table as two servants sat the main course on the table and felt utter rage and humiliation fill him. It was a pig, roasted and cooked that now sat directly in front of him. He lifted his stony gaze to meet Luke's stare as Luke's lips curled to a smirk before a mean laugh came from the fifteen year old's mouth as he remembered the shame they had put on Aemond. His humiliation only increased and he heard Visenya's laughing stop. Her eyes went to the pig, then to Luke, and finally to him and a horrified look came over her face. She reached her hand out and her mouth opened as if she meant to say something to him- a look of sympathy to him and anger towards her brother gracing her features as she remembered that day that she had defended him so fiercely and he had only turned her away.

But it did not matter, he did not want to hear whatever excuse she was going to make on Luke's behalf or the platitudes that she would whisper. He slammed his fist into the table and rose, the music abruptly cutting off, and he lifted his goblet to toast.

"Final tribute," he began his voice full of false charm and relaxation. His mother leaned forward, biting her nail and looking at him with worry. "To the health of my nephews, Jace-" he nodded to the elder boy before turning

his attention to his real target. That bastard he hated more than anything. Luke leaned back in his seat- that damned smirk still on his face. “But mostly to Luke, and Joffrey. You are each handsome, wise-” he paused and nodded as if in serious thought, his mother began to shake her head and Visenya whispered a ‘don’t’ into the air. Aemond continued, expressionless. “Strong.”

“Aemond.” His mother interrupted but Aemond ignored her, focusing only on Luke.

“Come, let us drain our cups to these Strong boys.” Aegon lifted his goblet eagerly and quickly drained it with a chuckle.

“I dare you to say that again!” Jace spat from where he stood on the floor by Helaena.

“Why?” Aemond spun quickly on Jace who began to stalk over to him. “Twas only a compliment. Do you not think your brothers strong?”

The Dragon’s Fire came over Jacaerys’s face and he swung a fist at Aemond which knocked him back quite a few steps and he grabbed one of the chairs to stabilize himself. Luke rose as well but Aegon quickly grabbed his neck and slammed it into the table. However the back of Aegon’s clothes were grabbed and he was yanked off Luke by Visenya who stood over Aegon with fury. She dragged him up off the floor and slammed Aegon’s forehead into the table as he had done to Luke and Aegon let out a wail of pain. Maintaining eye contact with Visenya, Aemond threw a punch back at Jace and the boy fell before scrambling back up but Aemond only grinned at him before walking over to swig a drink.

“Why would you say such a thing before all these people?” Mother demanded, rage coloring her tone. Aemond only shrugged.

“I was merely expressing how proud I am of my family, mother. Mm. But it seems my nephews aren’t quite as proud of theirs.” He turned back to his nephews who struggled against the guards. Visenya began to hike her skirts up, bringing them further up her golden thighs and Aemond felt his eyes begin to follow the motion. “Lifting your skirts for us all to see? It seems

you truly are your mother's daughter!" He laughed at Visenya (ignoring the twist in his gut as he implied at her being a whore and as insult and anger came over her eyes) but his laugh quickly cut off when he saw what she was reaching for. A dagger that was strapped to her thigh. She wrenched it out of its holster and twirled it in her grasp before starting over to him. He took a step back before he felt fire burn in him and he walked to meet her. However a figure came between them.

Daemon Targaryen, the Rogue Prince and perhaps the biggest threat to Aemond. Daemon placed his hands on his sword hilt and lifted a brow in a challenging gaze. There was something else in his eyes, as if he knew Aemond and what was in his heart and Aemond felt dangerously exposed. He had noticed how the Rogue Prince had caught some of the more intense glares between him and Visenya. Daemon tilted his head, as if asking if he truly wanted to do this. Aemond gave a nod of anger and understanding- not here and not now- but he made a promise to himself that he would face Daemon once more.

His gaze slid to meet Visenya's and they stared at each other for one more moment. A mix of sadness and anger and he felt that ache in his stomach once more before he shook his head and looked away from her before turning and leaving the room and Visenya behind.

As he made his way down the corridor he thought of the dance they had shared, the feeling of her waist under his hands, her laugh as they spun and the way her hair and eyes sparkled in the candlelight and how for just that moment, it was as if she was his Senya once more. But that moment was over and that time in his life was gone.

Disgust filled him and he wished he could burn down and erase all those thoughts from his mind. He hated her, Aemond hated Visenya Velaryon.

(Yet why had, at that moment, everything felt so perfect and as if all was right again?) He hated himself for those thoughts and nausea filled him once more as those butterflies of disgust swam in his stomach. No, Visenya Velaryon was the bane of his existence and he loathed her very being.

One Last Time

Chapter Notes

Honestly this chapter is probably going to be very disappointing to most of you.

It is not as intense or as fast paced as the previous but not every chapter can be that way. This is a filler as we move into the next chapter which will be Aemond during the Green Council episode before then moving on to The Black Queen episode. I promise those will probably be more fun for yall to read but I do hope that you guys still enjoy this one.

Much love to you all!

<33

Visenya stood across the room, standing before the seated figure of Daemon Targaryen. He sat there with raised eyebrows as he took in the sight of her and shook his head for the third time before sighing, again. He had been doing this for perhaps three minutes and Visenya was beginning to wonder if he was ever going to say anything to her. She shifted from foot to foot and twisted her fingers into the blue silk of her dress.

“I am beginning to think that the gods sent you to be as both a gift and a punishment, *tala*.” He finally spoke after a few more minutes and she lowered her gaze immediately. She had received many scoldings that started exactly like this in the ten years that Daemon Targaryen had been her father. “Perhaps raising you is my penance for all the trouble I have caused.” His words were said with that mixed exasperation and fondness that he always had when she got into trouble.

“I’m sorry, *Kepa*.” She murmurs, trying to keep her tone as respectful as possible so she can leave the scolding as quickly as possible. She wonders if he’s truly mad at her for bringing out her dagger to fight Aemond at

dinner when he was the one that told her to carry it always to ‘teach foul cunts a lesson’. He let out a chuckle at her words and she dared to peek up at him. He gave her a scrutinizing gaze and frowned before speaking.

“I have spent ten years raising you, loving you, and watching you grow into the girl you are now, and I do believe that I know you very well.” She nodded along and wondered what direction he was heading in with this. “I have spent the past two days watching you and hearing different reports of the activities that you have gotten up to and now I find myself sitting here with one great question on my mind. Her head lifted completely, and she met his gaze with a confused look. “I am going to ask you a question and you are going to give me an honest answer, you know I do not tolerate lies.” He raised a brow at her, waiting for her to answer and she swiftly did.

“Yes *Kepa*.”

“Good,” he nodded and uncrossed his legs before leaning forward and placing his elbows on his knees. “What is going on between you and Prince Aemond Targaryen?” Visenya blushed and gave an awkward cough. *Kepa* waited patiently for an answer while she coughed. She stood there for a few minutes, her mind racing as different memories flew through her thoughts.

That first little fight in the courtyard and how her hate towards him had only grown the longer she was in his presence and as every blow landed. How that thrill of hatred, that fire of rage that burned in her soul towards him, had only served to strengthen her as they fought and that surge of disappointment when they were interrupted. When she and Jace made their way into the Throne Room and how their eyes had connected at that electrical current of resentment and loathing only became more apparent. When she and Rhaena had bumped into him in the hall and his voice had dropped into that low, smooth, and dulcet tone that sent chills down her spine, how he had wittily challenged her and met her word for word in their verbal spar and then later met her blow for blow in the training yard.

She thought about how good it had felt to fight against him, to lash out and strike at him, to make him feel her anger. She thought about his weight on top of her as he held his sword to her throat and that fire that surged through her as they sat there at a draw- dagger to the heart, sword to the throat- and

how when he had stormed away, she had felt unsatisfied and frustrated, longing for that burning fire of rage that was always inside of her when she and Aemond were in close quarters.

She thought of black leather, large and rough hands on her waist, his breath on her cheek with her back to his front, and that faint scent of sweat and a bit of citrus that wafted from him. That fire raging to life as they danced with one another. She refocused her gaze back on her father, her mouth set in a hard, determined line. That fire was hatred, plain and simple, that was all it ever had been and all it ever would be. All of those feelings were a product of hate and rage, and her lack of relief was because she had not actually caused him any damage in the fight. She nodded her head and resolved herself. She loathed Aemond and she always would, all those twisted feelings in her chest were baleful rivalry and detest for his existence.

“I loathe him,” She spit out, her voice impassioned with her hatred, she poured every fiber of her distaste into those words. “It is as plain as that, *Kepa*” (It was not, it was not plain nor simple, in fact it was perhaps the most complicated twist of emotions ever felt in the history of mankind). “He was an insensitive boy who ruined Aunt Laena’s funeral, who tried to choke Luke to death and then bash Jace’s head in, and now he is a cruel and cold man who never outgrew his bitterness, jealousy, and dislike for my brothers. He is a man who claimed the most powerful dragon and now lords himself over any and everyone so that they feel as inferior as he does.” She was on a roll now, spitting out the words with vitriol as if by saying these words aloud she would further cement her hatred for the man who was the object of her conversation with her father. (The incident with the pig flew through her mind and for a moment that horror and sympathy on Aemond’s behalf flooded her. Even now her brothers still rubbed that horrid joke in his face. However as fast as the thought came it also left and she desperately shoved aside her remaining sympathy.) “He is the man I once held to the ground while Luke gouged his eye out and he thinks that I betrayed him when I chose to stop him and save my brother from being killed. He burns with anger at the idea that I chose in that moment to save my brothers lives like there was any way I could have possibly ever condoned him doing what he did.”

Her father's eyebrows only rose higher and higher with every word until she finally stopped, breathless with anger. He nodded his head at her, accepting her words before standing and walking over to her. He placed his hand on her shoulder before tilting her chin up so he could look her in the eyes.

"You must be careful with your actions my darling girl." He warned her. "I want you to stay as far away from Aemond as possible, no good can come from any further interactions between the two of you." He declared and she whispered a, 'yes, *Kepa*'.

Later he walked his daughter to her room and kissed her goodnight before walking back to his rooms as he rubbed his temples. Daemon wondered if these children had been given to him as a way of vengeance for the way he and Rhaenyra had caused Viserys headache after headache and he mentally apologized to his brother if Viserys had ever felt half of the exhaustion dealing with Daemon that Daemon now felt dealing with his unruly *Riñar*. He resolved to go to bed and not think about it for the rest of the night and then spend the entirety of the next day keeping Visenya away from Aemond before they left to return to Dragonstone.

(He also resolved to ignore the more troublesome things he had spotted in the interactions of Aemond and Visenya, signs he was all too familiar with and decided to only encourage his daughter's hate for her uncle. Her hating Aemond was something he could deal with wearing a much happier face).

Visenya had indulged herself with a practically scalding hot bath, watching the water run through her fingers as she swirled her fingers through the water and following the rising steam with her eyes. When the water grew cold, she swiftly exited the bath and allowed her ladies maids to dry her and then dress her in a cream-colored nightshift. She waved her hand and said goodnight to her maids, dismissing them from her presence and grabbed a blood red silken robe from where it was draped over a chair and pulling it

over herself. Sliding her feet into her slippers, she made her way towards the bedchamber and paused in the entryway, gazing on the peacefully sleeping figures of her sisters.

Not quite tired enough for bed, Visenya decided to go for a late-night stroll, just to have some quiet before they returned to Dragonstone, and she would resume her daily routine with her siblings and lose any semblance of peace.

She strolled the hall of tapestries which told the family history in beautiful woven art. She paused at her favorite, it was a tapestry of Vermithor and Silverwing flying over the Wall in the North. The depiction of Vermithor was beautifully done and Visenya swore that if you looked at it from a certain angle, you could almost see the flapping of his wings. She continued to stare at it a little while longer before continuing down the hall, her slippers scuffing on the floor beneath her when she heard the sounds of boots hitting the ground and she pressed herself to the wall, wondering if she stood there quietly for a moment that these mysterious people would disappear. Unfortunately, as she had heard them, so too had they heard her.

“Who goes there?” Called a harsh voice when her steps stopped it became clear that she had hidden herself. It was a voice that was all too familiar-Criston fucking Cole. Visenya had to resist the urge to scoff at the sound of his voice and simply contented herself to rolling her eyes. She remained quiet and hidden in the shadows. “Show yourself!” Cole demanded and Visenya wondered if she could melt into the tapestry and become one with it instead of having to deal with the Queen’s knight. Unfortunately, if she did not come out, they would come to her and so she stepped away from the wall

“It is only I, Ser Criston. Do try to calm down.” She sighed, using the most patronizing voice possible only to come to a halt when she saw who his companion was. It was Aemond. Of course. The very person she was supposed to be avoiding. She watched his eyes roam up and down her figure that was clad only in a nightgown, her robe hanging open, she quickly closed it and glared at him.

“Princess?” Ser Criston questioned, and she turned to face him, letting him take in the sight of her face to confirm who she said she was. That

customary frown of distaste came over his face as it always did when he looked at someone from the Blacks household. “You should have more care, Princess.” He began in that holier than thou voice and Visenya tried so hard not to roll her eyes. “I should hope that honor and decency would prevail and that you would have more sense than to walk around the corridors in such a state.” He looked her up and down and his frown only deepened. Visenya felt indignation take a hold of her as she processed his words. This knight dared to insinuate that she was a whore? The nerve he had to speak to her this way simply because of the favor the Queen gave him. Her fingers itched to claw at his face in her anger, but she watched as Aemond’s face twisted with some unplaceable emotion.

“Have care how you speak, Ser Criston. You may be my mother’s favorite, but the Princess is a woman of the Royal Blood. You should keep that in mind when you address her Highness.” His words were low and full of warning.

Both Ser Criston and Visenya wore matching expressions of shock at Aemond’s words. Visenya felt her mouth drop open and an incredulous laugh leave her mouth at the shocking twist. Ser Criston gave an awkward cough before turning back to Visenya.

“I do apologize, Princess Visenya. I was thoughtless with my words and should not have implied such untoward things.” Visenya wiped the expression of surprise from her face and nodded her head imperiously.

“Thank you, Ser Criston. Take care that it does not happen again.” Criston looked as if he had swallowed something sour, but he gave a bow and nodded his head. He turned to Aemond and gestured for them to continue on their path, but Aemond stayed still.

“Carry on Ser Criston.” Aemond said, his gaze never straying from Visenya. “I mean to speak with my niece for a moment.

“My Prince, are you sure that’s wise?” Criston asked hesitantly and Visenya wanted to laugh, obviously word of their near stabbing at dinner had spread, as well as the fact that Cole had been witness to their training yard duel earlier. Aemond turned to Criston and clapped him on the shoulder.

“Thank you for your concern, Ser Criston but it will be fine.” he turned his head to look at Visenya once more and his lips crooked into a smirk before he turned back to Cole. “However, if I don’t find you within the hour you may operate under the assumption that she killed me.” Cole clearly did not appreciate the joke, but he left anyway, leaving the bitter enemies together, alone in the hall. As the sound of the footsteps faded from hearing, Aemond spoke with a hint of wariness. “There’s no dagger hiding under that nightgown is there?”

“Perhaps there is.” Visenya threatened. There wasn’t but she almost wished there were. She looked at him with raised eyebrows. “I did not expect you to speak in defense of me, Uncle.” He scoffed at her and moved to walk towards one of the tapestries that was visible in the dim light.

“I did not do it to defend you. I did it because you are a Targaryen and an insult to one of us by someone outside the house is an insult to us all.” He spoke as he looked over the tapestry, as if looking at her was something he could not deign to do. She rolled her eyes at his response, how very Aemond of him to say so.

“I do not have all night, uncle. So, say whatever it is that you want and let us be done.” She said, crossing her arms over her chest. He did not turn back around, nor did he speak for many moments. After giving him a few minutes to speak, Visenya muttered a ‘whatever’ under her breath and began to make her way back in the direction of her chambers, aggressively brushing past his shoulder as she went.

A hand suddenly shot out and grasped at her arm and spun her around. Aemond was staring harshly down at her as if he had suddenly exploded with great emotion, and his eyes burned with hate and something else that made her stomach light with that fire again. He pushed her up against the wall and his body came in close to hers, practically caging her against the wall. His hand on her arm ensured she could not move away.

She stared up at him, partially enraged and partially curious as to why he would start a fight when she was very clearly intent on leaving and ignoring him.

“What do you think you’re doing?” He snarled and she sneered up at him, confused as to what he meant and so she spit back in the rudest possible manner.

“I gave you a chance- several minutes of it in fact- to speak and you did not. So now I am going to bed, so kindly remove your hands and leave me the fuck alone.” His eyes lit up with rage and he moved in a bit closer.

“Are you pleased with yourself?” He asked in a low voice and Visenya’s eyebrows drew together as she looked up at him, her dark eyes gleaming up at him as she tried to process his question.

“What? What on earth are you talking about?” She asked in an incredulous voice. What kind of question was that? Oftentimes she was pleased with herself, she was smart, pretty, a good fighter, and a dragon rider. She was fairly content, but she knew that is not what he was asking of her.

“I am referring to the fact that you went and got yourself engaged to Jace. You mean to make yourself queen and wed your brother for it because you were born a few minutes too late? So willing to spread your legs for a throne?” He spat and Visenya snarled in righteous fury at him. Her hand flew out, colliding with his cheek and snapping his head to the side.

“You call me a whore twice in one day? And after you condemned another for the same?” She felt fire light in her veins. She hid the humiliation she felt at being referred to as a whore, it struck her deeply when people whispered those words about her mother but to have them now directed at her felt like she was being stabbed in the chest. Instead, she gave him her mean smile that she always had reserved for him. “I love Jaceaerys and I cannot think of any man who I would want to marry more. There is no one on this earth who could ever possibly be better served to be my king, my husband, the father of my children,” She then paused and bored her gaze straight through his. Her next words a clear message for the insult he had laid at her feet. “-and the man I give my maidenhead to.” She spit out and she watched his eyes shift and dark emotions swam through them as she threw in his face all the ways Jace was better than him. She saw it strike him (she knew he always hated when Jace was placed over him as a side effect of his feelings that came from being a second born as well as his

childhood but right now, she was so furious that he dared to call her a whore and insult her brothers so readily at dinner.) A dangerous look came over his face.

“I hate you.” He hissed down at her as something dark flashed in his eyes and Visenya only gave him a sarcastic and mean laugh before responding.

“The feeling is very much returned. I hate you more than I ever thought possible and there is not a day that goes by that I do not.” For every word of hate he spoke, she had five more in return, and she pushed, and pushed. Perhaps too far but she wanted to push Aemond over the edge, so far into rage that he would be overcome with it and lift his hands against her. (She wanted to prove to herself that he was as horrible as she tried to convince herself. She wanted another reason to hate him. She wanted him to hurt her so that she could be forever firmly cemented in her utter detest of him and that those sickening knots in her stomach would disappear forever).

At her words he let out an almost dragon-like roar of absolute anger and his hands came up. A laugh at being proven right began to bubble in Visenya’s throat but when his hands came down it was not on her throat or any other part of her. Aemond’s hands slammed into the wall on either side of her, if she had been caged in before, she definitely was now. He pushed into her space, pressing close and all of him invaded her senses. The feel of the leather against the thin silk of the nightgown, the faint scent of sweat mixed with that hint of citrus, and the way he towered over her as he pressed her to the wall with his body.

The laugh in her throat died as quickly as it came, and she could only look up at him in complete and utter shock. Her dark eyes widened as his narrowed and he pressed even closer to the point where there was barely any space between them. She could feel his thigh in between her legs, just inches below her center and that fire in her belly from their fight and their dance roared to life once more despite how much she wished it would not. His chest was heaving as he breathed and so was hers, their breaths intermingling as one and she could feel his against her cheek as he exhaled—the scent of lemon cake was on his breath and in the back of her mind she felt surprise that he still ate those late at night as he had when they were children. She had used to think it was sickening when she smelled it on his

breath but now it was almost intoxicating, but she shoved that thought away and continued to breathe heavily as she stared up at him, desperate to know what on earth Aemond was doing.

Something vicious and desperate gleamed in his eyes, as if he was trying to find some emotion on her face or something hidden deep in her eyes. She continued to stare into his eye (the scar and the patch only serving to further in the intensity of the moment), her expression turning hateful before him as she thought of his wrongdoings in a desperate attempt to quench the fire in her stomach. He leaned in, his head dipping down until his mouth was only an inch or two away from her own, their lips so close and yet the distance so insurmountable. The world froze again, and their breathing synchronized as they stared at one another. With a voice lower than she had ever heard before, Aemond spoke, his gaze never breaking from hers and his lips still ever so close to hers.

“I. Hate. You.” He bit every word out as if it were the greatest effort imaginable, whispering it with so much force that she almost felt the impact of every word as it left his lips and came to her ears.

“I hate you too.” She whispered back, ever so softly and his eye ripped away from staring at hers. He yanked himself away from her, his hands coming down from beside her and his thigh leaving the place between her legs as he ripped himself away from her.

“Go!” He spat at her, his words an animalistic snarl and Visenya curled her lips up at him.

“Stay the fuck away from me.” She bit back at him and stormed away from him, down the hall, and into her chambers.

(Blue silk, silver curls, and the smell of peaches flash through Aemond’s mind that night as he lays in bed. He leaves his bed to pace his chambers

before overturning one of his tables in his rage. The peaches and the silk and the curls disappear, and they are replaced by daggers, cruel words, and sneers that speak of superiority). (He wonders why he isn't sick at the thought of pressing a dagger to her throat but the idea of harming her with his own hands is sickening.)

Visenya had spent the entire morning, as well as the early half of the afternoon in her apartments with her family. She had awoken to Baela and Rhaena softly whispering next to her sleeping form in the late morning and then proceeded to break her fast with her sisters. The morning had been fairly uneventful as the girls directed their ladies' maids on what to pack but Visenya was distant the entire time. (She occasionally got flashes of the memory of leather, citrus, lemon cake. Fire in her belly, a thigh between her legs and breath intermixing as a low voice whispered how much he hated her). Rhaena and Baela gave her odd looks the entire time, but she hardly noticed at all.

In the early afternoon Joffrey came to play and the sisters had happily played a game of hide and seek inside their vast apartments with their nearly ten-year-old brother. Joffrey's giggles of delight sent any memory flashes running from Visenya's mind and she soon lost herself in the laughter and warmth of time with her sisters and brother.

Jace and Luke then entered and Visenya greeted Jace with a loving kiss on the corner of his mouth to which he returned happily and gave her a luminous, delighted smile. All six of them had proceeded to play together, choosing to push all the furniture to the end of the room, blindfolding one of them, and the rest ran around trying to escape the blind person's grasping hands. Jace was quick and hard to escape, and Baela was quickly caught in his grasp, and she succumbed to a fit of giggles. She was joined quickly by Luke, and then Joffrey, and then Visenya before Rhaena won the round.

Now Visenya was walking down the halls of the Red Keep, clad in her Dragon Riding habit as she came to bid her grandfather goodbye before she departed on Vermithor's back. Outside the King's apartments stood Ser Erryk and Visenya greeted him with a fond smile and happy words that he returned as he let her in.

The room smelled of incense and Milk of the poppy and she fought the urge to cough at the strong smells. Visenya came to a pause for a moment as she walked past the great model of Valyria and ran her fingers over it with great love as she spotted the two statues of herself and Grandfather that they had made together and put in the model city. A figurine of Balerion the Black Dread sat atop the highest peak of the model temple of the old gods and Visenya smiled at the memory of the happiness that had come over Grandfather's face when she had gifted it to him two years ago- the last time she had seen him before yesterday. A moan of pain came from the bed and a sharp stab of worry hit Visenya as she rushed to her grandfather's bedside.

"Grandfather?" She spoke low so as to not surprise him. His one eye fluttered open and looked around for a moment before his foggy gaze came to rest on her face.

"My Visenya?" He asked in his raspy voice and Visenya gave a tearful nod.

"I'm here Grandfather. I had to visit you before I left."

"Visenya?" he asked again, and she nodded in confirmation, ignoring her chest that tightened at his confused and dazed words. "My dear girl... I am so sorry... you have to forgive me." he gasped out and Visenya hurried to hush and soothe him.

"You have nothing to apologize for, Grandfather. It is I who should apologize for not visiting sooner." But Grandfather only shook his head at her.

"Visenya.... I- I am not long for this world." He whispered and she shook her head furiously.

“No!” Her voice came out sharply. “No, that’s not true!” She denied desperately as she reached over and grasped his hand tightly in her own hands and pressed a kiss to the mottled flesh. “You cannot leave me, Grandfather. I could not bear to live in a world without you.” She choked out and he only let out a sad chuckle as he patted her hand comfortingly.

“I am afraid.... that I must... my dear. Your grandmother Aemma calls to me. I can hear... her, she whispers to me often and I... I cannot resist her call any longer.” He wheezed out and a tear fell down Visenya’s face.

“Please...” she whispered, and he lifted his hand shakily to press it to her cheek.

“I am so proud of you, my dear Visenya. You are everything I ever hoped you would be, and I love you dearly.” She gave a watery smile at his words, and he returned it with great pain. “And one day-” he coughed harshly before continuing. “One day, you will be queen.” Visenya nodded at him, and he smiled again. “You will be a better queen than even the Good Queen Alysanne.”

“I can only hope.” She whispered and he reached to grasp her hand with surprising strength.

“You will be.” He whispered. “As beautiful as Queen Rhaenys was, as strong and fierce as Queen Visenya, and as wonderful as Queen Alysanne. Promise me... promise me that you will help carry on our legacy.” His last words came out so weak and full of begging that she immediately nodded in agreement, eager to do whatever he asked.

“I will, Grandfather” She pressed a kiss of promise to the finger that Queen Aemma’s wedding ring rested on and he smiled up at her.

“Good,” he then took his hand out of her grasp and pointed with a shaky finger to the corner.

“I have final... my final gifts for you just there.” He coughed. “Take...” he wheezed again and Visenya waited patiently. “Take...them. They are yours. All of it... gifts for my grandchildren” He gasped out and Visenya nodded

in agreement before standing and walking to the corner. There was a small pile of fine fabrics, a few lovely and rare jewels, a pair of toy dragons that she knew were for Aegon and Viserys, but on top of it sat a sword. A gleaming Valyrian sword with a ruby shining at the hilt. Blackfyre. Visenya gasped and spun to face her grandfather.

“You can’t mean...” she trailed off and he coughed out a laugh.

“For my grandchildren... befitting of future kings and queens.” His words were barely understandable now and she picked up the sword with great care and trepidation as she beheld the legacy of the Conqueror. “Take it.” He commanded with the little strength he had left, and she came over to his bedside one final time to press a tearful kiss of goodbye to his cheek and to whisper a prayer to the Gods for his soul. She swore to the gods as she stood beside her dying grandfather that she would not tarnish this great gift he had given to her and her siblings, that they would not take for granted this precious gift of his. She knew that her brother would wield that sword with honor, with pride, and that he would never besmirch their family name or their grandfather's and their House's legacy.

“I love you” she whispered to him, and he smiled one last time.

“And I you.” He whispered back and Visenya smiled that pained and sad smile. She walked back to the corner and proceeded to hide Blackfyre amongst the fabrics, ensuring it was completely covered so she would not be seen with it and accused of stealing. She then hefted the load and proceeded to the door and knocked with her foot. She cast one last glance back to her grandfather before leaving as Ser Erryk opened the door and her grandfather disappeared from her sight forever.

Aemond watched as Vermithor soared out over the skies of Kings Landing with a roar boasting of freedom. He waited for relief at Visenya’s departure to hit but instead all he felt was that horrible nausea once more.

The Death of the King and Usurpation of the Queen

Chapter Notes

HELLOOOO

This one was finished early and covers the events of the episode 'the Green Council' here we hear Alicent's thoughts, Rhaenys's thoughts, and mostly Aemond's as the news of the king's death and the plot to take the throne.

I did change Rhaenys's whole standing in front of the greens and only roaring at them, instead she will emerge and then escape immediately to tell her cousin, daughter and grandchildren because she is concerned for their safety.

I hope you guys enjoy this because violence and angst is next as we enter the Black Queen episode and I show yall my version of the miscarriage, Storms End, and more!!

Much love!

It is in the earliest hours of the morning, the sun still down and the sky dark, that a maid comes to Queen Alicent with the news of the king's death and the world stops for a moment. Alicent's life, her existence, her power, was all tied to the life of her husband and as long as he had drawn breath, Alicent was able to wield wondrous amounts of power and control (particularly over her family, the court, and her life). With Viserys now dead there was a vacuum of energy where that power had once lied, and desperation gripped at her heart.

What was she to do now?

She thought back to Viserys's words only a few hours ago when she had seen him last. How he whispered of Aegon being the Conqueror reborn, his

destiny to unite and lead the realm against some mysterious darkness. She had only just begun to make amends with Rhaenyra and then Viserys had spoken those damning and prophetic words and Alicent's heart was gripped by cold icicles.

This was her husband's will, was it not? This was one of those rare and strange prophetic dreams that the Targaryens received on occasion. In his dying words the king had named Aegon heir and promised that he was to save the world from darkness and unite the Seven Kingdoms. Alicent was a good wife, and she would not fail her husband by disregarding his final wishes.

(She also knew in the back of her mind and the depths of her heart that she could maintain her power through her son sitting on the throne. Queen Mother was another title of astronomical power and with it came security. Yes, Alicent would be Queen Mother, her son would be king. She would have done her duty to the realm and her husband and saved her family).

Now she sat around the small council chambers, her hair unbound and her face bare and hinted with the red around her eyes for the tears she had shed for the man her life had been bound to. Criston stood to her left and her father to her right as she looked over the council room as the advisors placed their tokens to signify attendance. Tyland Lannister made some horrid joke, but Alicent barely registered his words, the words of Viserys echoing in her mind and the faces of her children flitting across it as well.

"The King is dead." Her father intoned and the room fell to stony silence. "We grieve for Viserys the Peaceful, our sovereign." In the back of Alicent's mind she almost snorted at that. Viserys the peaceful? No, but perhaps Viserys the indecisive or Viserys the Avoider. "Our friend," her father continued. "But he has left us a gift. With his last breath he impressed upon the Queen his final wish. He declared that it was his heart's desire that Aegon should succeed him as King and Lord of the Seven Kingdoms."

Yes, Alicent thought as they all looked at her. My son will be King. My son will seat the Iron Throne and I will stand as Queen Mother, the most powerful woman in the Seven Kingdoms. However, when they brought up

their intentions to capture, imprison, and murder Rhaenyra and perhaps her children Alicent slammed her hands down.

Not Rhaenyra. Never Rhaenyra. She may hate her former friend's lack of responsible behavior and her flouting of duties, but she could not stand by and let them plot Rhaenyra's death. Rhaenyra was reasonable and she would not want war, she could be spoken to, persuaded with fair terms. Jacaerys and Visenya were innocent of their mother's crimes, and they were not responsible for the taint of their younger brothers' baseborn birth. And despite their bastardry, Lucerys and Joffrey were but children, no more deserving of death than Alicent's own children. She would not abide by this; she could sway Rhaenyra. She could prevent the possibility of war.

"We will not kill the King's most beloved daughter! One more word and I shall have you sent from these chambers and sent to the wall!" She screamed and slammed her hands to the table, silencing the room and her father with those words as they beheld her with great nervousness. But when asked what to do, she could not bring herself to form the words, her mind still racing and clouded with the insanity of the morning.

What exactly was she going to do?

Aemond heard the news the moment he stepped from out of his chambers and his mind went numb, he lost feeling in his limbs, his heart frozen at the shock of it. Father was dead? Father was dead and now there was to be a new ruler.

For just the briefest of moments his mind flashed to Visenya and how she would feel. As much as he loathed it, Visenya and the King had enjoyed an extremely close and loving relationship and he knew she would be devastated at the loss of her grandfather. But as quick as he thought it, he shoved it away. Visenya and her family mattered not anymore. Aegon was to be king. And by Aegon's side would be Helaena.

Helaena. Aemond thought with a sudden shock of concern. Had anyone informed his sister? Would they take care as they spoke to her, being mindful of how sensitive she was and what this news could mean to her? Would they understand the complexities of her emotions and be gentle or would they say the words carelessly to her, callously informing her of their father's death with no consideration for her? He hastily made his way to his sister's apartments, hoping to reach her before any others.

As he walked a part of him wondered if the news was even true. Many had whispered that the king had died for weeks as his mother and grandfather ruled with more and more power and yet it had not been true. Was there even the slightest of possibilities that this too was just one of the many rumors that spread of the king's death.

But he came into his sister's rooms and there sat his mother next to Helaena, a somber look on her face and wearing a dress so deeply green it bordered on mourning black. Helaena wore that look of terror on her face as she often did when she got one of her more horrible visions and he knew.

This was no rumor. His father truly was dead, and he had failed to get to Helaena first. She looked up at him with wide, lilac eyes and he wished he could walk over and give her those 3 taps to her hand that was his way of comforting her, as she could hardly bear more touch than that. He looked to his mother, and she gazed back, her mouth tilted downwards and sadness as well as determination was set on her face as she beheld him. His mouth that had begun to open to speak closed slowly and he felt the weight of this knowledge hit him.

Everything would be different now.

Aemond sat by the roaring fire in his mother's apartments, gazing deep into the flickering flames and rolling over everything in his mind to the sounds of the crackling fire. Father was dead and Aegon would be king, this would be seen as a clear usurpation by the Blacks- particularly Daemon and Rhaenyra. Conflict was inevitable and war was on the horizon. Daemon

Targaryen was a notorious warmonger- and he had always been- and he no doubt would be pushing Rhaenyra to declare war against Aegon.

Aemond almost found himself looking forward to it. The prospect of coming face to face with the Rogue Prince, he on Caraxes and Aemond on Vhagar. He knew it would be a fight for the songs but it was one Aemond was confident he could win. Vhagar was massive, larger than any other (even Vermithor he thought viciously and with hints of satisfaction). She was a mighty beast under Aemond's control. No lord, no knight, no army could stand against him, his family, and his dragon. He had spent years desperate to prove himself, desperate to be seen as equal, as worthy, to be wanted and now here it was.

But in the back of his mind there were those thoughts, those thoughts that set his stomach to debilitating nausea. Thoughts of flying through the air, burning all his enemies to ash only to be met by a Bronze Fury and a Warrior Princess in the skies. Thoughts of their Dragons screeching and clawing, burning one another as they fought. He had often longed to drive his sword through her traitorous heart and yet now with war approaching, the opportunity possibly near he found himself conflicted for the slightest of moments.

There was no room for conflicted emotions, no time for those thoughts. Visenya had betrayed him, she had ripped out his heart and spit on him. He would face her down gladly and if it came to it, he would burn her to ash or tear her heart out himself. She was a Black, a traitor. And Aemond could- he would- kill her for it.

(Wouldn't he?)

His thoughts were interrupted by the appearance of Ser Criston in his mother's chambers bearing news of Aegon's disappearance from the palace and grandfather sending Erryk and Arryk after him. Aemond listened to him speak but did not turn his head away from the fire.

"Ser Erryk knows Aegon, he has the advantage." At those words, Aemond's head turned ever so slightly as he felt Criston's gaze fall upon him- knowing what he was thinking. Aemond listened as his mother strode over

to Ser Criston and continued to speak to him, her voice now dropping into such a low tone he almost struggled to make out what she was saying to the knight. “You must find Aegon before Ser Erryk and he must be brought to me.” She murmured to Criston and Aemond uncrossed his legs as Criston replied to her.

“I’ll come with you.” He declared as he stood, causing his mother to turn rapidly and rush back over to him.

“That would not be my desire.” she spoke, a certain hint of franticness in her words and She put her hands on Aemond’s arms. He lifted his forearms to cradle his mother’s arms, holding her as she grasped him desperately. (She had come to rely on him greatly in these years since he had claimed Vhagar. She often vented her problems to him and relied on him to try and keep Aegon and Helaena in line when she could not.) “If anything has happened...” She whispered out, fear ripe in her voice.

“Cole needs me, Mother.” Aemond could not deny his thrill at being needed (he could not fight that part of him that always desired to be needed, wanted, valued). “Ser Erryk isn’t the only one who knows Aegon’s doings.” He murmured to her, maintaining a low and calm voice. He watched her turn to Cole for confirmation, which the knight reluctantly nodded. Mother looked back at him, and he gave her a nod before dropping her arms and stalking out of the room, Cole quickly following behind him as they began their search for Aegon.

“Aegon brought me to the Streets of Silk on my thirteenth nameday.” He told Cole casually, in a quiet voice as they prowled the streets, dressed in the coarse cloaks of commoners, a black hood pulled over his head to hide his eyepatch and Targaryen silver hair from the eyes of the smallfolk. “It was his duty as my brother, he said, to ensure I was as-” he pauses and searches for the most roundabout way of speaking. “-educated as he was.” He finishes and comes to a stop by a great metal door with a metal knocker.

“At least that is what I understood him to mean.” Aemond muttered and Cole gave him a look of confusion that made Aemond want to smack him. It wasn’t that hard to follow the inferences of the conversation and yet this knight insisted on acting as if he were an imbecile. Aemond knocked on the door, hoping Cole would not ask for clarification. But of course, he did.

“I don’t follow?” Cole questioned, his voice rough with confusion and Aemond resisted the urge to strangle his mother’s knight- knowing damn well that he did follow. However, he now saw the opportunity of what to say, and he took it, saying the words in a way that was almost certain to make Cole as uncomfortable as possible. Aemond leaned in close and dropped his voice to a whisper.

“He said time to get it wet.” The words were uttered with a facial expression of stone and Aemond watched as Cole’s facial expression of confusion morphed into one of outrage, horror, and disgust. Satisfaction at having horrified Cole rolled through Aemond and he tried very hard not to laugh. Cole turned to bang the door knocker once more before speaking in a voice of utmost righteousness.

“Every woman is an image of the mother,” he shifted uncomfortably. “To be spoken of with reverence.” He knocked the door again and Aemond almost fell over trying to keep himself from gaping in incredulousness and hilarity at the hypocrisy of the knight’s statement. Every woman is an image of the mother to be spoken of with reverence? And yet had he not spoken down on Visenya just the other evening and implied her to be a whore? That simmering anger returned to him as he recalled the sheer nerve and disrespect this lowly knight had to insult a Princess of the Blood- she may be Rhaenyra’s daughter, but she was a Targaryen Princess. (The fire in him was definitely anger on behalf of his family name, not that uncomfortable feeling in his stomach when he thought of the hurt that flashed in her eyes at the insults that were levied at her). He tried so very hard to not roll his eyes or strangle the knight before sending up a prayer to the gods for a distraction. They answered, in a manner that was most unfortunate for Aemond.

A woman with brown hair and eyes of jade green opened the door, and she stood there draped in silk and jewelry and Aemond immediately knew who

it was that stood before them. He shifted and ducked his head to the side in the hopes that she would not be able to recognize him or pinpoint his identity.

For it was this woman who Aegon had brought him to on that night of his thirteenth birthday, handed her a generous purse of money, and shoved Aemond at her with the words 'teach him everything'. And she had. It was an experience of both great pleasure and great discomfort, especially as he recalled it now and as he thought of how horribly awkward and horrified his younger self had been, but how desperate he was for Aegon to like him. For Aegon to want to keep speaking to him and for Aemond to have another friend. It had been only two years since Aemond had lost Visenya as his closest friend and he had been so desperate for another that he had immersed himself in Aegon's games. (That was until Aemond turned fifteen and realized he was much stronger and smarter than Aegon and had then proceeded to take advantage of those facts during his interactions and fights with his elder brother).

"The prince is not here." The lady of the Silk Streets scoffed and Aemond felt frustration pile up in him.

"Then has he been here?" Cole asked "Earlier, perhaps?" and she shook her head, that sly and secretive smirk making its way over her lips.

"Quite a bit earlier," she laughed. "Years ago, in fact. He does not deign the streets of silk with his presence any longer. The places he is known to frequent are..." she trailed off thoughtfully and with a hint of amusement before speaking again. "Less discriminating." Cole's face turned to confusion once more while Aemond's went to trepidation (remembering certain proclivities with their same gender that Aegon had once joked about when they were younger). Cole pressed for more information and the whore's face became one of impatience. She did not answer, only wishing them luck before turning to Aemond with that smirk as she wished him her best and Aemond felt his discomfort return as well as his anger. "My how you've grown." she purred, and he kept a cold, expressionless face as he looked her up and down before scoffing before giving her a mere 'hm' and walking away.

“He could be dead.” Aemond suggested to Cole as they walked.

“Let us hope for your mother’s sake that is not the case.” Was all Cole said and Aemond privately wondered if it would not be best for everyone, including Mother, if Aegon was gone- disappeared forever, never to touch the throne and fuck things up more than he already tried to. He scoffed at Criston’s words.

“Here I am, trolling the city, ever the good soldier, in search of a wastrel who has never even had a half an interest in his birthright.” Aemond bit out, bitterness filling him once more. “It is I, the younger brother who studies histories and philosophy. It is I who trains with the sword, I who rides the largest dragon in the world. It is I who should be-” He caught himself at the last second, wary suddenly of what he was to say even amidst his resurgence of feelings of inferiority and hate for his place in this world. He licked his lips and turned his head so Cole could not see the frustrated look on his face. Cole said some words that were meant to be comforting- of how he too had toiled, but he did not understand that no matter how hard Aemond toiled, he would never win even if Cole could. He would always lose to Aegon (to Jace), forever destined to toil meaninglessly.

Aegon truly would be king. Aegon would be king and Aemond would now be his heir- the thought struck him suddenly. Jaehaerys was still too young to be named heir as he had yet to make it to the age of six and was often prone to bouts of intense illness that left Helaena and Mother worried sick over whether he would live or not. Aemond was now next in line for the throne. For the smallest of moments, he wondered about leaving Aegon to never be found and taking the Throne for himself, but he knew he could not, that Mother would not abide by it, that Cole would not allow it on his watch- his loyalty to Mother’s orders ever so strong.

No, Aemond was destined to stand to the side and watch Aegon ascend to a position Aemond could only ever dream of.

The Princess Rhaenys stood in indignation as the Queen came into her rooms (her cell).

“I will do you the courtesy of assuming that you have a very good reason for keeping me prisoner in my rooms.” She snarled at the Queen, ever a dragon lady.

“My sincerest regrets, my lady.” the Queen said, her voice raw and hoarse but Rhaenys had no sympathy for her. But she then saw the way the Queen held herself, the way that red rimmed her eyes and the way her dress was the darkest shade of green Rhaenys had ever seen. Horror gripped at Rhaenys.

“The King.” She gasped out and Alicent nodded mournfully. For a moment Rhaenys could not think. Viserys was dead? She had remained behind a few days after her family left so that she could see her cousin (brother) one last time and wish him her love and give final goodbyes and yet he was dead before she could see him. However, clarity hit her as she realized exactly what that meant for why she had been kept prisoner. “And you are usurping the throne.” She accused.

“It was my husband’s dying wish.” the Queen rushed to defend herself and Rhaenys scoffed, of course it was, she rolled her eyes.

“It is of no consequence.” Rhaenys sneered because she knew. She knew it would not have mattered if it was the King’s dying wish or not because the Greens would have usurped the Throne regardless. They always would have. No matter what, no matter the circumstance they would have sought to place Aegon on the throne.

“Aegon will be king.” Stated Alicent with a look of regret that Rhaenys hardly believed. “And we could use your support.” Her support? She who loved Daemon as a baby brother, she called Rhaenyra daughter, and cradled Rhaenyra’s children to her chest with dearest and deepest love.

“I must accredit you for your boldness.” Rhaenys spit with a disbelieving smile.

“House Velaryon has received a huge insult from the Princess Rhaenyra at the claiming of Lucerys and Joffrey as Velaryons when we know well and true that they are not. Her husband kept your daughter from you- alone in Pentos, she claimed bastards as your sons' children, your husband grasps so greedily at the throne, and it has only brought devastation upon you and your family and now he has abandoned you! Gone for six long years and leaving you to defend Driftmark alone.” Alicent gave claim after claim of injustice, but Rhaenys only shook her head.

“You speak of things you do not understand. Things you never will. You are no dragon Alicent and yet you seek to play among them and claim to be one with them, but you are not. You do not understand our nature, why we do what we do, and you do not get to ply me with false sympathy over your perceived slights.” Rhaenys spit word after word with a patronizing tone. The girl did not know the force she sought to play with. Daemon had kept Laena in Pentos yes and Rhaenys had railed at him for it for a good long week and yet she understood why he had. A dragon kept from his mate was a grievous sight, unbearable to handle and Daemon had been unable to bear to watch as Rhaenyra was given to Laenor and sought comfort in the arms of Harwin Strong. Rhaenyra had given Laenor beautiful children, legitimate children, and yet it was Coryls who had pressed them for another, convinced he needed a male heir and that Visenya would never do as Lady of Driftmark. Laenor had not been cuckolded, not when he was the one who encouraged Rhaenyra to try with Harwin after Laenor himself had tried a few times to no avail.

Alicent tried to ply Rhaenys with soft words of how Rhaenys should have been queen, how her blood right was stolen from her, but Rhaenys only scoffed at the obvious desperation, and she turned on Alicent, knowing what it was the Dowager Queen wanted. She wanted Rhaenys's dragon, she wanted a dragon for their side so that they were not at such a clear disadvantage to Rhaenyra. Alicent grew more desperate as Rhaenys did not answer, even going so far as to offer her Driftmark to be passed through Rhaenys to Visenya. But Rhaenys could not be swayed, she would never

turn her back on her kind, on her family to side with an Andal woman who dared to try and fly amongst them.

“You toil still in the service of men,” She hissed at Alicent, coming to stand before her and looking down on her. “Your father, your husband, and now your son. You desire not to be free but to make a window for yourself in the wall of your prison.” She leaned close and dropped her voice to a whisper. “Have you never imagined yourself on the Iron Throne?” And she knew she had struck Alicent true, that her words had cut across her so cleanly in how true her words were and Alicent left her, once more alone in the silence of her room.

It was outside the Great Sept that Aemond and Cole found Aegon. Or rather Arryk and Erryk had found him, and he was now being dragged outside when Aemond emerged from the corner he hid in as he watched the scene. Cole held his sword out at Arryk, causing the man to come to a halt.

“I do regret this friend.” Cole said to Arryk, Aemond kept his eyes on Aegon, watching the way he was scanning the stairs and clearly planning to escape. Aegon burst into movement, elbowing Arryk and flying down the steps and Aemond immediately flew after him as Arryk and Cole began to fight.

Aegon went sprinting down the steps as Aemond came down the other side, quickly gaining on his much less in shape brother before flying at him and tackling him to the ground. Aegon struggled beneath him, crawling away and Aemond reached out and latched onto his leg before yanking him back. Aegon began to laugh hysterically as they fought, scratching and biting at Aemond, causing him to yelp and then smack his brother before kneeing him in the gut.

“I was hoping you disappeared.” Aemond commented as he wrestled Aegon into compliance.

“Is our father truly dead?” Aegon asked, breathless beneath him and Aemond gave a sneer and sighed at the pain of having to deal with Aegon.

“Yes,” he panted and lowered his voice to a tone of distaste and mocking. “And they’re going to make you king.” He sneered and Aegon spit up at him, the spit flying into his only remaining eye causing Aemond to yell in pain as Aegon scrambled out from under him and began to run away but Aemond quickly grabbed him again.

“NO! NO! LET ME GO!” He screamed at Aemond as he pinned Aegon in place keeping him in place in front of him. “Let me go!” He screamed once more, desperation coloring his tone and Aemond felt that bitterness. He had the greatest power at his fingertips and yet he did not want it in the slightest. It was fucking unbelievable. “Brother please! Let me go, I have no wish to rule, no taste for duty, I am not suited!” Aemond scoffed, that was for sure.

“You’ll get no argument from me.” He sneered and Aegon quickly spun around and grasped Aemond’s face between his grubby, horribly awful smelling hands.

“Let me go and I will find a ship and sail away from here. Never to be found. You can do it! You can have it! Take it, take the throne and marry her and rule!” Aegon begged and Aemond froze for just a moment, he froze at the weight of Aegon’s words. Because it was a tempting future (except for the marry her part, Aemond had no idea to whom Aegon referred. Marry Helaena? Or did he perhaps mean for Aemond to wed Rhaenyra’s daughter and combine claims. He felt an odd shiver at the thought, but no, it was a shiver of disgust, of horror at the idea- an idea so loathsome.) He contemplated it for just a moment, for just a second but it was too late, and Criston Cole appeared beside him to drag Aegon to their queenly mother.

When Aegon is crowned, Aemond stands there with a grim and expressionless face trying desperately to hide his disgust with Aegon and

his faint amusement at the lack of excitement of the smallfolk at the sight of Aegon being named their king.

They place the Conqueror's Crown on his head, and he wears their father's knife and a false replica of Blackfyre (The sword had been stolen somehow and the entire Keep had been searched from top to bottom, but it was nowhere to be found. Grandfather had the little servant who watched Father's chambers killed when the boy refused to confess to stealing it) and Aemond wants to vomit at the abomination of this because his brother may be named after him, but he is no Conqueror. He is no king. (He dips his head only the smallest amount possible, knowing it is required).

The people cheer and Aemond observes their now smiling faces and wonders if they lie to Aegon's face to appease the dragons they know sleep beneath them. If perhaps they think that is why they were brought to the Pit, for a message that said, 'Cheer and Hail him as King or be fed to his Dragon'.

But the ground explodes, and the smallfolk turn from cheering to screaming in seconds as they flee for their lives from what rises up from the ground. Helaena was right, there was indeed a beast beneath the boards. The Red Queen rises up from the ground, and the armored form of Princess Rhaenys sits astride her.

In a matter of seconds of her emerging, she and Meleys go flying out of the pit. To freedom. To Dragonstone. He knows that in a matter of hours, Rhaenyra, Daemon, and their family (and Visenya) will know of the king's passing, of Aegon's coronation.

Aemond takes in a breath and nods his head. War is on the way, he can feel it, can taste it in the air, and now he hungers for it.

The Cold Hands of Death

Chapter Notes

You guys thought you were getting storms end lmaooooooooo that starts next chapter!!!

This is the product of my stay in the hospital, pain meds, and the fact that I hated every second of the chapter I had previously wrote so I erased the entire thing and then wrote this.

I am splitting the tenth episode into three chapter so this is the first.

I really hope you guys like it, like truly because I think this has some good moments

“Daggers at family dinner are something you know I cannot approve of.”

“Yes, Muna.”

“I admire your willingness to defend your brothers, my sweet girl but honestly!” Muna sighed her exasperation and Visenya tried so very hard not to grin as she caught sight of her father’s approving grin and nod from behind her mother’s back.

“Part of me is considering whether or not you deserve to be punished,” Muna continued and now Visenya’s mouth dropped open in outrage.

“However,” Muna held up a hand to prevent her from interrupting. “Given the insult levied at your brothers and that your actions were done with their best interest at heart I think I can overlook the matter.” She decided and Visenya couldn’t help it- she crowed in victory.

She very quickly snapped her mouth shut however at the look her mother gave which said, ‘don’t make me change my mind’.

“Thank you, Muna.” Visenya said in a much more restrained tone as she got up from her chair, she had been seated in to be lectured and went to hug her mother.

“You really are something else.” Muna laughed and Kepa chuckled. (Rhaenyra did not know Daemon was laughing about a very different reason for why he thought she was something else, recalling to mind his rather odd and telling conversation with his eldest about her hate for Aemond). Kepa then yanked her into a hug, holding her close and shaking his head fondly at her.

“She is our penance.” He told his wife who laughed in agreement. “Now I am going to take our penance and engage her in that mock sky battle I promised.” At his words Visenya pushes away from him, her eyes wide and shining with delight as her mouth drops open.

“Really?” She asks, excited to play fight for the first time in over a month with her father (he had been busy overseeing the next stage of Joffrey’s flying lessons and had found it hard to also have time for games).

“Really.” He confirmed, laughing at her excitement. “Go change and we can go.” She picked up her skirts and fled the room within seconds. He turned to his wife before he left the room as well. “And I do believe you’re supposed to be resting, my love. The maester did say to relax as much as possible and avoid too much stress!” He called, laughing when his wife let out an irritated groan at the reminder of the Maesters restrictions.

It was a rather sunny and beautiful day and so many of the dragons had vacated their nests under the DragonMount in favor of resting in the sun for a day. This had turned the fields of Dragonstone into one of the most dangerous and yet exciting places to be as Visenya carefully wove between dragons, following closely behind Kepa.

The four young dragons- Arrax, Vermax, Moondancer, and Tyraxes- were still rather small in comparison to many of the monstrosly sized dragons that now called Dragonstone home. This meant that while the older dragons

lay about in the sun, The younger dragons still found haven inside the volcano seeking strength from the heat in order to grow.

Seasmoke remains in the caves as well, choosing to remain asleep and continue his decade long mourning of his last rider than to join the others. Visenya knew she would need to visit him again soon- over the past 10 years having made it a habit to visit her father's dragon at least once a week. (It helped her to stay close to and honor the memory of her late papa as well as to ensure Seasmoke remains alright.)

Silverwing, Vermithor, Syrax, and Caraxes all slept under the sun, smoke billowing up from their nostrils and if you squinted in the distance Visenya was rather certain she could make out the shape of the Grey Ghost lurking somewhere on one of the higher hills.

She pointed it out to Kepa, who shielded his eyes from the sun for a moment to look at the spot in which she was referring before quickly agreeing that he thought it was the wild skittish dragon as well.

“Rytsas, Syrax!” Hello. Kepa hummed as he passed the great Golden Lady who now had grown as big as Meleys. Syrax let out a warning rumble of unhappiness that had Kepa chuckling. *“Your mother must be upset with me for reminding her of the Maester’s orders.”* He told Visenya and she giggled as Syrax let out another rumble, as if confirming his words.

Silverwing was coiled with Vermithor, meaning Visenya had to climb over the beautiful She-Dragon in order to greet her own beloved dragon. Luckily, the ever-friendly Silverwing was happy to shift and trill at her mate’s rider. Visenya came up and pressed her forehead to Vermithor as she knew Kepa was doing to Caraxes, and she closed her eyes allowing herself to completely sink into their bond. She then patted his scales a couple times before making her way to the ropes of his saddle and beginning the long climb up.

“Emagon ao grown p̄r m̄rītubis?” Have you grown since the other day? She teased her dragon- as she swore the climb up had only gotten longer. Vermithor only gave a huff and thunked his long tail on the ground which caused Visenya to laugh, taking that as her dragon being fed up with being

teased every day. Visenya turned to spot her Kepa already in his saddle and preparing to fly with Caraxes and so she hastily wrapped the chains around her waist, securing herself in. She watched as the long, snakelike form of Caraxes began to flap his wings and pick up speed before flying off the edge of the mountain and up into the sky, before she encouraged Vermithor to follow. “*Sōvegon!*” *Fly!* She cried and Vermithor began to run, starting his long process of building the immense speed it took to heave himself off the ground and when he did she ducked quickly to avoid the air current.

By now Caraxes had disappeared from view, somewhere in the clouds and Visenya just patted Vermithor and encouraged him to fly about and enjoy himself. His wings went up and down in great motions that caused waves in the Sea beneath them, and they flew up over the clouds, Vermithor then going into a sort of roll. Visenya laughed, he was clearly having a fun day and so would she. It was then that the chilling shriek of Caraxes sounded, and he emerged from the clouds behind them before giving a playful snap at Vermithor’s feet, causing the older dragon to rumble.

The battle had begun. Visenya tugged on one of the ropes and Vermithor pulled his wings up, rolling back and falling under Caraxes and disappearing beneath the clouds. She knew it would be hard to be stealthy given the enormous size of her mount but that did not mean she couldn’t try.

“*Arghugon !*” *Hunt them.* She whispered, knowing that despite her low tone Vermithor would know what she said, would feel the command. He wove in and out of the clouds, ducking behind a particularly large one when she saw the whiplike tail of Caraxes and so Visenya giggled and whispered another command.

Vermithor shot forward, coming around in front of where Caraxes was flying before emerging from the clouds and hanging his mouth open to make his own playful snap at the younger dragon before flying over him, buzzing her Kepa. Caraxes shrieked and Visenya laughed loudly as her Kepa swore and yanked Caraxes to dodge.

They continued to practice their stealth and different maneuvers, even practicing dodging the fire of one another's dragons. Not once did either of

the magnificent beasts grow restless or unhappy, recognizing the thrill and the fun their riders were having. At one point Silverwing came bursting through the clouds and almost knocked both Vermithor and Caraxes to the sides with her speed and size as she shot in between them with a loud roar, clearly wanting to play now too.

The mock war now had turned into the three dragons weaving through the skies and a race broke out between Visenya and her Kepa at one point, Caraxes only winning because he whipped his tail in Vermithor's face only moments before winning. Visenya had order Vermithor to snap at Caraxes for that and Kepa had only laughed at the outrage that was obviously pouring out of her and Vermithor.

While they flew through the skies to play another round of mock battles (Silverwing now asleep on the Mount once more) a ferocious roar sounded and Vermithor's entire being changed. His head shook from side to side, and she felt every ounce of playfulness leave him as he flapped his powerful wings and took off in the direction of their home, Caraxes quickly following behind.

When the clouds cleared and they emerged into the skies over Dragonstone, Visenya saw why. Meleys was flying in an almost panicked manner towards the island, flying as if she were escaping or something and Visenya caught sight of her grandmother on the Red Queen's back- shouting commands at the dragon and urging her to go faster.

Vermithor soared over Meleys, going into land with her and Visenya could not help the feeling of appreciation inside her at the protectiveness her dragon had for both her and their home, the dragon almost having adopted a 'King of the Island' protector mindset that often amused Visenya.

Grandmother was dismounting quickly and Visenya watched as Kepa began to do the same while she unwound her chains and hummed soothing words to her irritated dragon. Finally, she got free and began to climb down before finally jumping onto the ground and jogging to catch up with her father and Grandmother.

“I must see Rhaenyra immediately!” Grandmother was exclaiming as she hastened for the palace and Kepa huffed as he tried to pry answers out of her in that way that reminded Visenya of when Joff wanted something (she then remembered that her Kepa was to Grandmother what Joff was to her and she tried not to giggle at the thought of her father as an annoying younger brother).

They quickly walked up the long path of steps and entered the palace. Kepa tried to shoo her away to find her siblings, but she only snorted at him and continued to follow. They passed Rhaena in the hall and Visenya grabbed her hand, yanking her sister along with them.

“Mother!” Muna greeted happily as they entered the room, pausing for a moment to cast a confused look at her two daughters who came following the adults into the Great Hall. “Might we hope for news of Father’s recovery?”

“Viserys is dead.”

The world went completely still for a moment, everything froze and Visenya grasped her sister’s hand tighter, letting out a gasp of shock and pain as the news struck her in the heart. Grandfather was dead? She had known it was coming but to hear the actual words, for it to have actually happened was something she had not been prepared for, no matter how much she thought she was.

“No.” Rhaena murmured in quiet shock and Visenya continued to shake her head in silent denial. The man who had once played dolls with her and told her stories, who had dresses made for her and gave her jewels and her most beloved dragon figurines. That sweet, kind, peaceful man was dead? Gone from the earth, never to be seen again, never to hold her hand, kiss her forehead, or make his horrible jokes. Grief stabbed her in the heart and tears began to work their way down her face.

“There’s more.” Grandmother continued, her tone now angry instead of sad. “Aegon has been crowned his successor.” At those words Visenya let out an incredulous laugh of shock and disbelief. Aegon as king? Aegon was the last person on earth who even wanted to be king and yet now he sat the Iron

Throne? She wondered if he even sat on it or if he just lay in his chambers all day and drank while his mother and grandfather ruled for him. (For a minute she wondered how Aemond had taken the news, if he was bitter at his brother's ascension or if he was thrilled at his proximity to the throne now. She scoffed at her thoughts of Aemond before shoving him from her mind).

The adults continued to talk, Kepa's voice only escalating as his grief and denial took over him. Rhaena and Visenya now stood by the hearth in the room, not even heeding the conversation of the adults and instead taking a moment to mourn.

Had the Greens even waited until his body was cold before they usurped the throne? Visenya wondered, her callous inner mind concluding that they had probably hidden his death and used it for their gain, lying and stealing their way onto a throne they had no place on. The blood of the fucking Andals ran through their veins. Her uncles and aunt were half Hightower. Half Andal. The fucking Greens, fucking Alicent and Otto who had no idea the power of the throne they sat on, or the family they sought to claim themselves as part of. Would they even give Grandfather a proper Targaryen funeral? Would he be burned on a pyre by Dragon fire and then interred in the sept or would they bury him like an Andal, like a follower of the Seven instead of the Valyrian King that he was.

She was yanked from her thoughts by a violent shriek that had her, Rhaena, and Grandmother lunging to Muna's side while Kepa went stumbling back. Muna began to quickly yank her skirts up before thrusting a hand under them and checking herself. When she withdrew her hand it was coated in blood and they all stared at it in horror.

"The baby's coming." Muna whispered.

Everything goes to shit faster than Visenya can blink. Muna is stripped of her clothes, not that it matters the dress is caked with blood on the inside. The shift is worse however, the stain already spreading wide and heavy and Grandmother begins yelling for towels and hot water to be brought in. She screams as contraction after contraction hit her and curses flood out of her lips in a more colorful manner than Visenya has ever heard from her mother.

Visenya and Rhaena begin to help each other unthread their sleeves and pull them off while binding their hair back. At some point Baela comes running into the room, panting with the effort of running all the way to the room. Her sleeves are already gone and her hair in a knot on her head. Another scream echoes through the room and all three girls flinch. Their grandmother remains unfazed, still dressed in her armor as she helps her daughter through this very different battlefield.

“Breathe Rhaenyra.” She commands, and takes every curse that mother has to offer her gracefully. “Baela bring me that towel there, dip it in water first.” Baela does as she is directed and Grandmother thanks her as she takes it, handing Baela a sweat stained and bloody cloth she had already used. “Rhaena, grab that- no that- that one.” Grandmother commanded, pointing towards the table at the various cups that rested on it. Rhaena grabbed the correct one and rushed forwards. Grandmother helped Muna to down the Milk of the Poppy but it seemed to do nothing for her, minutes passing and the pain not easing even a little.

Visenya cannot help it, but as she tears more clothes to be used for her mother, horrifying thoughts creep unbidden into her mind. Thoughts of Aunt Laena, dying in childbed during a horrid labor. Thoughts of Grandmother Aemma, also dying in agony as a babe tore apart her insides. Great-Grandmother Alyssa dying as she too was trying to expel a babe into the world and panic began to creep into her chest and grab ahold of her heart with its frozen fingers.

But she squeezes her eyes shut for a moment and grits her teeth. There is no room for her panic or fear in this room right now as her mother performs a feat of the gods, pushing this child out on her own. She hurries over to grandmother with another cloth for her mother’s forehead, trying

desperately to wipe some of the sweat and blood away while her mother screams at the baby to get out of her.

In the distance a desperate and mighty shriek pierces through the air that shoots down Visenya's spine. Syrax, crying for her rider's pain. Every ache and tremor and piercing shot of pain that feels like agonizing death shoots through Syrax too. For every grunt of pain from Muna, there is an answering roar from Syrax.

Suddenly, Muna straightens up, pressing a hand down on Grandmother's shoulder and heaving herself into a standing position to suck in a mighty breath before letting out an almighty bellow.

"DAEMON!" She roared, becoming a dragon herself and causing the ladies maids to wince at the loudness of the cry.

Kepa had not stuck around when Muna had gone into labor, not like he had for Viserys and Aegon, standing there and gripping her hand the entire time. No this time he had stumbled back and away from Muna as if he were scared to even look at her.

"DAEMON!" Muna bellowed again and Visenya felt tears prick in the back of her eyes. Her poor mother was calling for a husband who would probably not come, too riddled with his own grief and fears to comfort his wife. Visenya knew he stood in the room above, plotting a war, plotting vengeance and chaos and bloodshed while Muna labored and screamed and cried. She knew he would not come and that he would abandon Muna to this fate to bear alone. But steps sounded in the entryway and Visenya turned in shock to behold Daemon Targaryen, standing in the mouth of the room's tunnel entry staring at his wife as she supported her weight against Rhaenys and gripped her contracting stomach with the other hand.

"Kepa..." Visenya whispered, but he did not seem to hear her or even register her or her sister's appearance (they had come to stand beside her when they had spotted their father). He only began to hesitantly walk into the room.

“*Byka zaldrīzes*” *Little dragon*. He called to his wife and Mother’s head snapped around, her eyes widening as she spotted her husband. Grandmother’s gaze had filled with relief although there was a hint of a glare as she beheld her cousin.

“Daemon.” Muna gasped out as pain wracked her body once more and he rushed over to her, helping to hold her up as her strength began to fail. “Daemon, it- somethings wrong- something- I can’t-” she gasped out (Rhaena took Visenya’s hand, gripping it fiercely in her own, Visenya did the same to Baela with her free hand.)

Their father’s head turned to take in the sight of the girls who had gone still and pale at the sight of their mother and he nodded his head towards the entry.

“Go. Get out.” He commanded and they gave slow, shaky nods before stumbling out of the door, praying that the gods would not take their mother.

The gods do not take his wife, the gods spare her life. They leave her on the earth, alive and technically fine except for the fact that they have stolen their innocent baby and claimed the baby before it even got to draw a breath. Rhaenyra cries into his arms, the little babe held fast in her arms as she cradles it to her chest. He feels tears course down his cheeks as well as he holds her, rocking her back and forth and murmuring how sorry he is.

First his beloved, precious, kind, sweet, loving, naive, fool of a brother and now his precious, sweet, innocent baby girl- the only daughter he truly would share with Rhaenyra. Loss wracked his body and his chest ached with the sheer pain of his grief. In the distance both Syrax and Caraxes shrieked and wailed, announcing their riders’ pain for the world to hear as they mourned the baby. What more would the gods take from him and Rhaenyra, he cried out in his head.

They spend well over an hour on the floor, cradling each other and their baby as they cry and desperately search for comfort in each others presence. They do not even relinquish the babe to the Silent Sisters when they come, instead choosing to prepare the baby for the funeral themselves. While Rhaenyra wraps the body, Daemon sings an Old Valyrian lullaby, one he used to sing to Joffrey every night (one he still sang to Aegon and Viserys) and another tear falls because he had dreamt of singing to a new baby girl and yet this would be the first and last time he would ever get to.

Even though the baby had been a monstrous little thing, she had been perfect in Daemon's eyes, even as he took in the tiny wings on her back, the golden scales on her head, and the tiny tail between her legs. It had not mattered to him at all, because in that moment he held her, she had been everything he wanted, now stolen from him and Rhaenyra by the Greens.

He now stands before the burning pyre with his wife's hand clasped in his own as they cling to one another, watching their baby burn to ash. Rhaenyra has gone stone cold, emotionless while simmering rage burns beneath his skin. He grips her hand tightly and looks at her face again, aching for his wife's pain and wondering if there was any way to ease her suffering.

Behind him stood their children and his cousin. Dressed in the black of both their house and of mourning with the threads of red decorating their clothes, they form a grim picture. Jace and Visenya stand together, their hands clasped together between them and their crowns on their brows. Joffrey stands just before them and they each have a hand on their younger brother's shoulder, consoling the boy who had been so excited to finally have a baby sister who he could protect, not one that was older than him. (He had been so determined that it was a girl, telling everyone he had dreamed it was so.)

Lucerys stands to Jace's right and beside him is Baela. Baela whose eyes rim red and who tangles her fingers in her deep blue cloak as she tries not to shed tears for her sister where all their subjects can see. Beside Visenya is Rhaena- whose silent tears track down her face- stands in the grasp of Rhaenys, who stands guard over her grandchildren like a furious mother dragon over her clutch. Behind them are the nursemaids with Aegon and Viserys in their arms, completing the picture of a grieving family.

It is the unsheathing of swords that draws him from his thoughts of grief and pain. He quickly makes his way around the group of children, placing himself between them and any possible danger while Rhaenyra stands with them, still frozen with her grief. He makes his way down the mountain to where their Kingsguard stand, their blades unsheathed and pointed at another Kingsguard who he quickly recognizes. Ser Erryk.

He waves a hand at the Kingsguard, allowing Ser Erryk through and then watches as the knight kneels before him and draws a golden crown inlaid with rubies from his satchel. The crown of his grandfather, the Great King Jaehaerys. But also the crown of his beloved brother, Viserys.

“I swear to ward the Queen with all my strength and give my blood for hers.” The knight begins to swear and Daemon reaches out, slowly taking the crown from the knight’s hand and holding it in his own. He looks down at the three headed dragon emblazoned in the center. The symbol of a king. Of a Queen.

“I shall take no wife, hold no lands, and father no children.” Daemon runs his finger over the dragon. He then turns, crown in hand and begins to make his way up the mountain back towards his wife- his Queen. As he strode closer he saw Rhaenyra’s eyes widen imperceptibly with each step, saw his children all take in surprised gasps.

“I shall guard her secrets, obey her commands, ride at her side, and defend her name and honor.” Comes the final words of the oath and Daemon lifts the crown and places it on Rhaenrya’s brow with a soft reverence. He then kneels at her feet and gazes up at her, love, admiration, and complete loyalty shining through his eyes.

“My Queen.” He murmurs, being the first to truly hail her by her title. Behind him he hears the shuffling as everyone goes to their knees behind him. Sery Erryk’s voice echoes out again.

“All hail Rhaenyra of House Targaryen, the First of Her name. Queen of the Andals, and the Rhoynar, and of the First Men. Lady of the Seven Kingdoms and Protector of the Realm”.

The Storm

Chapter Notes

I hope you guys like ittttt

I wanted to change some of the events and make things a bit more drawn out between Visenya and Aemond meaning that now she hates him fully and that when they clash in the next couple chapters it will truly be fire and blood.

I know you guys May not like everything I did with the scene but I think the way that I did it is really important for what's going to happen in the story later and I really like it.

Honestly I'm also now really excited to completely take this story in my own direction now and not some thing that is guided by what's happened in the show. I'm so excited to take you guys on this really insane right I'm about to put y'all on

The sound of boots marching against the ground echos from down one of the long halls that lead to the Great Hall. It grows louder and louder with each second until two guards appear from in the entrance of one of the halls. In between them stands the Queen. She is clothed in all black, a black cloak, a black dress both trimmed with red and her golden crown gleams on its bed of silver hair. Queen Rhaenyra screams power as she climbs the steps escorted by her four, heavily armored personal guards.

“Queen Rhaenyra Targaryen, First of Her Name, Queen of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men. Lady of the Seven Kingdoms and the Protector of the Realm.” Ser Erryk announces as she steps into the room. Immediately everyone sweeps into deep bows and curtsies, pausing whatever they are doing to pay obeisance to their new Queen.

“Your Grace.” The King Consort murmurs her new title with an almost sultry tone and for a second the entire thing feels far too intimate, like there should not be anyone in the room except for the King and his Queen.

Standing in the center of the room is the painted table, ignited with the hot fires of the Volcano, the orange lava lighting the map and outlining territories and rivers. Around the table stand the various lords and her Kingsguard. At the opposite head of the table stands the King Consort, Daemon Targaryen and on his right is Princess Visenya and on his left the Prince Lucerys.

The Queen strides over to the table, her two stepdaughters quickly falling into step behind her ready to aid their Queenly mother. She makes her way to the head of the table where her mother and Crown Prince Jacaerys await. Princess Baela makes to stand beside her grandmother and Prince Jacaerys while Princess Rhaena takes up the spot on the queen’s other hand.

Silence rings throughout the room, no one daring to speak until the Queen does. Her lords wait with bated breath and her family watches her with careful eyes. It is a moment of strange intensity, as if this next second and whatever the Queen says will forever define who she is as Queen and what is to come from her reign. She stands there, her eyes analyzing the Table before looking up and locking eyes with her Consort.

“What is our standing?” Her voice carries over the room, breaking the silence, powerful and commanding as she truly steps into her new role. Everyone exhales and life in the room resumes again as everyone jumps back into action.

The War Council has begun.

“We have 30 knights, a hundred crossbowmen, and 300 men at arms. Dragonstone is relatively easy to defend but as an instrument of conquest-our army leaves a lot to be desired, My Queen.” The King Consort jumps to report to the Queen stepping forward to begin his report. His tone is brusque, straight into business. “I have sent word to my loyal men in the City Watch, I’ll have some support there, but I cannot speak to numbers. I have already received some declarations from a few of the Watch that they

are on their way now to defect. As for our sworn houses, we already have declarations from Staunton, Massey, Darklyn, and Baremmon. And of course, our loyal cousin house- Celtigar.”

A Lord and Lady with silvery gold hair and eyes of pale blue step forward from their place on the right side of the table. Of the houses of Old Valyria there are only three remaining, and they are all bound together by history, by blood. Lord Jaerys Celtigar placed his hand over his heart and gave a sharp bow while his wife the lady Aelora dipped into a curtsy.

“House Celtigar is your faithful servant, my Queen. Our swords and our lives are yours.” He swore and the Queen gave him a soft and grateful smile.

“Your loyalty is deeply appreciated, my Lord.” She replied and he gave her a firm nod of thanks. Her gaze then turned back to the table to take in the sight of the different pieces that were scattered across the map- and she realized just how sparse their allies were. “My Lady Mother was an Arryn and the Vale will not turn cloak on their kin.” She spoke and Rhaena took out the sigil of House Arryn and placed it on the table.

Her gaze flicks over to look at her husband who nods his agreement. Beside him, Princess Visenya has not not spoken a word yet or made any move to participate like her siblings had, instead her eyes roving over the map and her lips moving as she whispered to herself. Daemon casts a quick glance at his eldest daughter, as if checking on her before turning back to the map.

“Riverrun was always a close friend of your father, Your Grace.” Lord Beesbury jumped in, eager to aid his Queen (eager to go to war, to bring glory and honor to his house that had not been seen since the early days of King Jaehaerys). “Before King Daemon left to join your side, he instructed ravens to be sent to Lord Grover to discuss the matter of his support of you.”

“Lord Grover is a fickle man, easily swayed from side to side. He will need to be firmly convinced of the strength of our position and that we will support him as well.” The Queen spoke, her tone thoughtful as she placed both hands on the edge of the table and leaned on it.

“With your permission, I will go to treat him myself.” King Daemon spoke up, his eyes shooting to the queen’s as he sought her approval. “I could go atop of Caraxes. Princess Baela can join on top of Moondancer. If we can show him our strength in dragons he will be easily convinced to our side.” Baela turned to the Queen with eager eyes, desperate to prove herself to her mother, to prove her strength and helpfulness as war approached. The Queen nodded slowly as she came around to the idea.

“I see the merit of the idea. Very well, my husband King Daemon as well as our daughter Princess Baela will entreat with Lord Grover on Dragonback.” her husband gave a slight smile while Baela glowed with confidence and pride, thrilled her parents had chosen to allow her to help with the task. The Princess Rhaenys gave her granddaughter a proud smile.

“What of Storms End and Winterfell?” Ser Steffon asked, and Lord Celtigar turned to the queen as if to speak but a different voice came across his, quiet and yet strong pulling all attention to her words.

“There has never lived a Stark who forgot an oath. House Stark will swear to us and with them the North will follow. The North is full of battle-hardened men whose help will be invaluable.” Princess Visenya reaches over and grabs the Stark placard and sets it firmly down on the spot of Winterfell. “We will have the North.” She declared, her voice ringing out over the room and her parents nodded in agreement, many around the room murmuring their own agreement as well.

“Lord Borros Baratheon will need to be reminded of his father’s promises.” The Queen declared, looking at the Storm’s End on the map and Visenya frowned.

“Lord Borros is proud, Your Grace. He may not like to be yoked to the promises of his father.” Visenya declared, tapping her fingers thoughtfully on the Painted Table. “He will need more than just a raven.”

“I’m sure we can find someone to soothe his pride.” the Queen replied to her daughter, giving her a proud smile (her daughter had studied the Lords and their houses for years now, memorizing all she could and now she was finally exercising her knowledge). “What news from Driftmark?” she then

asked as she turned to Princess Rhaenys who was quick to fill her in on the status of Lord Coryls. The talk of war, of alliances and of enemies, continued for moments until Lord Bartimos interrupted, looking around at all of them with an incredulous, disbelieving expression as he spoke.

“Forgive me, Your Grace but Alliances hardly matter! Your cause has a power that the world has not seen since the Empire of dragonlords of Old Valyria.” The room went silent, and everyone turned to look at the Queen. Because he was right. As of right now, sleeping inside the DragonMount were most of the oldest and deadliest dragons alive.

The dragons of the young Princes and Princess Baela were already mounted and ready to be flown to war. Syrax had grown to almost surpass Meleys in size and Caraxes had only grown larger and larger with every passing year.

Visenya heard those words leave Lord Bartimos’s mouth and she knew that it was not the young dragons he referred to, however. She knew he was speaking of Meleys, of Syrax and Caraxes. But most importantly she knew that he spoke of Vermithor. It was why everyone’s eyes had flickered over to her when he spoke (they thought they were all quite subtle about it) before they had turned to face her mother.

Everyone knew that while the Greens had only two adult dragons, one of them was the dreaded Vhagar. And everyone knew there was only one dragon who could stand against Vhagar in terms of size and strength and that was Vermithor.

That one day she and her beloved Bronze Fury would be forced to meet Vhagar in battle one day (meet Aemond in battle). That the earth itself would shake with the might of the raging fight between the two beasts of almost mythic proportion.

She had said she could not wait to face Aemond in battle, to press her sword into his heart and rip it out and watch the life fade from his eyes and now the chance could possibly stand before her soon and yet why did she

not feel eager? Why did she instead feel a twist in her stomach instead of delicious fire at the thought of defeating her bitterest enemy?

(Leather, Lemon cakes, citrus, and sweat. The cold stone of the wall to her back and their breath mixing as one. His lips inches from her. The whispered 'I hate you'.) These were the thoughts that flooded her mind, that only served to fuel that twist in her gut before they were quickly chased away by more bloody and violent thoughts.

(Swords, fists flying, a hand around a boy's throat, a rock held high, the fire of hate, the burn of betrayal).

Visenya watched as her mother and father strode from the room to meet Otto Hightower, watched as various lords went about to their assigned tasks and yet she remained there, gazing over the table at the spot where Kings Landing sat. When she and Aemond faced one another would it be a thing of the songs? Would that fire fill her once more? (And if she killed him, would she finally be freed from that twisting and uncomfortable feeling in her gut?)

The Greens come- or rather Otto Hightower does- with terms of peace (demands for surrender) and Muna and Kepa fight. The minute that the air between them goes tense and primed for a fight the Queen sends everyone out of the room, especially their children- not wanting them to bear witness to their parents' disagreements. But as children do (particularly Targaryen children) they did not really listen and snuck to one of the tunnels to hide in and listen to their parents' discussion.

"You are not thinking with a clear mind, Daemon. Your mind is clouded, filled with rage and I fear you are too eager to jump to war. I do not wish to jump straight to violence, the peace terms must be considered." Their mother argues, keeping her voice level and patient even as she fights with her husband.

“They have stolen your birthright, claimed the throne and crowned a drunken *Andalos* as king. You are of the purest blood of Valyrian, and they seat a half-blooded boy on the throne who drinks and whores his way through life! Of course, I jump to violence and bloodshed, and it is a wonder you do not Rhaenyra.” Kepa spits back and Jace begins to snicker quietly into his sleeve to muffle the sound as Kepa heaves insult after insult at Aegon (although they are quite fitting).

“My duty to the realm goes beyond birthright and you know it,” their mother pauses and all 5 of the oldest children lean as close as they dare to hear what she might say. “The song of Ice and Fire.” She says and the siblings all look at each other in confusion, all turning to Visenya who is the most well-read for answers. But she has none, for it is in no book she has ever read nor story she has ever heard. So, she frowns and shakes her head in cluelessness.

“What?” Their father demands, frustration coloring his tone and their mother repeats her words.

“Aegon’s dream?” she asks, and a scoff comes from Kepa. They hear their father plop down into a chair with a heavy and exasperated sigh.

“Dreams did not make us Kings my love, Dragons did.” He condescends to their mother, but she gives him an incredulous laugh.

“And yet this dream did. They crowned him with the Conqueror's Crown, and he bears his sword. The people have accepted Aegon and I must consider carefully if it is truly best for me to put the realm to ash.” Visenya frowned at that before her eyes widened, remembering how she had failed to present her mother with a certain heirloom. She stood before any of her siblings could stop her and turned to jog down the tunnel to head towards the staircase that led to her rooms.

She threw open her doors and ran over to the chest that sat under her window, by the shelves of Dragon figures. She opened the chest lid and carefully reached in before pulling out a sword in its black sheath whose ruby gleamed over the top.

Blackfyre, which she had kept hidden until her grandfather had passed. She hefted it into her arms, picked up her skirts in the other hand, and ran back down the stairs. This time she didn't even bother to go and hide in the tunnels, instead barging right past Ser Erryk and Ser Lorent and throwing open the Hall doors.

"Visenya?" Kepa frowns, standing up and going to stand by Muna. "Muna and I are speaking, you-" But Visenya cut him off (something that the children usually dared not to do, Kepa hated being disrespected and it often led to some kind of punishment. Jace had lost dessert for a month and been forced to train every morning before dawn the last time he had been disrespectful.).

"Aegon does not wield Blackfyre." She pants, breathless from all the running and immediately the expressions of her parents turn to confusion.

"What are you talking about?" Muna asked and Visenya straightened up and held the sword out in front of her, displaying it for them to see.

"Aegon doesn't have Blackfyre. Grandfather gave it to me before he died." At that both her parents' mouths drop open and Luke, Jace, Baela, and Rhaena come out from their hiding spot (something that does not go unnoticed by Kepa, who frowns at them for a moment before remembering what Visenya had said.).

Silently he strides over to her and gestures for her to hand him the sword, which she does readily, and he takes it before slowly unsheathing it. The magnificent Valyrian blade catches the fire light and casts hauntingly beautiful shadows across the room. The ruby gleams the color of freshly spilled blood and Visenya feels chills down her spine as she beholds the Conqueror's sword. Kepa then turns and walks over to Muna and kneels at her feet, the sword held aloft in his hands.

"My Queen, from generation to generation this sword has passed. Now it rests in your hands." Muna takes the sword and Kepa rises, the siblings coming to gather round and watch as their mother holds the mighty sword. She then turns to Jace and Visenya wonders if the presentation of this sword

has swayed her any closer to war as a strange expression comes over her mother's face.

"My darling boy, you are my heir. You are the Prince of Dragonstone. The sword belongs to you." Jace's face turns to one of awe and wonderment as he slowly and carefully takes the sword from his mother's hands and accepts the sheath and its belt from their father. He undoes the belt of his old sword and then he ties the new one around his waist. With a resounding *shiiink* it slides into place in its sheath. The ruby gleams by his side and Jace places a hand on it, almost reverently as if he cannot believe that the legendary sword now rests at his side.

He turns to Visenya as if to share the moment, share his excitement with her and she smiles a beaming smile- always proud of him, always happy for him.

(But there is that ache in her chest as she watches him be named heir officially, as she watches him inherit the sword of the King- or the Queen. The part of her that is sour, bitter and sad at the reminder that he would always be first, that he would always inherit everything and that she would forever get nothing unless it was gifted to her by her lord husband)

She continued to smile at him and to ooh and ahh at the sight of the sword with her siblings, but that ache grew inside her chest and for a moment she wished that she had been born first and that Jace had come second. She ached for honor, for glory, for power and for something to be hers through her own right.

When no one was looking she turned away from her brother and looked towards the fire, squeezing her eyes shut to try and quench the burn of jealousy and bitterness, instead replacing it with pride and love before turning back around with that smile. (Resolutely shoving any thoughts of negative feelings far away from the moment.)

She did not know her father had seen her expression, had seen that momentary glimpse of anger and bitterness- of sadness. How his eyebrows had furrowed with worry and she did not know that was why he came to stand behind her and place a loving hand on her shoulder.

Kepa flies away to Riverrun with Baela the next morning and Visenya wants to cling to him and beg him not to go, a part of her still that little girl who wants her family to be full of happiness whose greatest concern is what games they shall play later that day. But Caraxes and Moondancer fly away and so does Visenya's childhood, there will be no fun games anymore, no laughing or playing around. Now there is War Council, alliance talks, the threat of death and the possibility of losing everything (the possibility of winning everything is equally as terrifying sometimes).

But with the death of joy and childhood there is some good news. Visenya has not lost both her grandfathers. Grandfather Coryls lives- and even though Visenya is not as close to or as fond of her paternal grandfather, family was family, and she was grateful to not lose another grandfather only days after the death of the other.

Grandfather Coryls bends the knee quickly to Muna before standing and grasping her hand in a loving, fatherly grasp and offering a moment of comfort before they get back to work. With the might of Driftmark officially behind them, the Blacks feel their position stabilize just a little more and Visenya prays that Kepa secures the Riverlands.

Grandfather asks what the Queen aims to do, and she answers, hands clasped before her and holding fast in her stance that has been the cause of frustration and irritation to her bannermen (and her husband).

"If war's first stroke is to fall, it will not be by my hand." She repeats for what must be the 12th time in only a few hours and Grandfather frowns.

"You do not mean to act?" His voice is pushy, as if he is testing her strength of her position. She holds fast.

"Taking caution does not mean standing fast. I wish to know who my allies are before I send them to war." Her voice is strong, and Grandfather gives

her an approving smile before limping to the side of the Painted Table where the Stepstones are displayed. He tapped the Stepstones and looked at his gooddaughter with a grim smile.

“The consequence of my...” he pauses and casts a careful look at his grandchildren. “-near demise in the Stepstones is that we now control them. I took care to fully garrison the territory this time. A total blockade of the shipping lanes will be in place in days, if not already. The Triarchy have been routed and the Narrow Sea is ours!” He declares leading many of the Lords to let out approving claps and words. “All trade will pass through our hands, the trade taxes belong to you, Your Grace. We have secured a good position and a large amount of coin that will come from this trade tax.” Muna nodded and she smiled as he confirmed the news of a good financial backing. “If we further seal the Gullet we can cut off all Seaborne travel and trade to King’s Landing.” Grandfather suggested, reaching over to draw his finger from the Stepstones to the Capitol City.

“I shall take Meleys and patrol the gullet myself.” Grandmother announced, reaching over to squeeze Muna’s hand and giving her a reassuring smile which Muna gratefully returned.

“If we drain the Narrow Sea, we can surround King's Landing, lay siege to the Red Keep, and force the Greens' surrender.” Mune drops Grandmother’s hand and walks closer to the table with a sigh.

“If we are to have enough swords to surround King’s Landing, we must first secure Winterfell, the Eyrie, and Storm’s End.” She decides and the Maester steps forward.

“I’ll prepare the ravens, Your Grace.” He makes to leave after Muna nods permission, but he is stopped by the voice of the Crown Prince.

“We should bear those messages.” Muna’s head snaps up to look at her eldest son and Visenya feels herself go numb. “Dragons can fly faster than ravens... and they’re more convincing. Send us.” Their mother stares at her son for a moment as she weighs her options and Visenya’s breath begins to pick up, her vision starting to white out and tingling filling her limbs as she prays her mother to deny Jace’s offer because Visenya knows if she affirms

it, Visenya and Jace will be separated, something that has never happened and something that makes Visenya worry for his safety as he goes out all alone.

“Very well.” Muna agrees and Visenya’s stomach bottoms out. “Prince Jacaerys will fly north. First to the Eyrie to see my mother’s cousin, the Lady Jeyne Arryn, and then to Winterfell to treat with Lord Cregan Stark for the support of the North. Prince Lucerys will fly south to Storm’s End and treat with Lord Borros Baratheon.” Both her brothers straighten up (Visenya tries so hard to not bite back her shock and outrage at not being chosen for a mission, but she knows better than to question her mother before all the lords). “We must remind these lords of the oaths they swore... and the cost of breaking them.” Queen Rhaenyra states, her hardened gaze looking out over the table and her statement ringing true in the hearts of her children and lords. They needed these lords and their support and by the gods Visenya hoped they would gain it.

It is in a hidden alcove on one of the higher battlements that Jace and Visenya cling to one another in a tight embrace, desperate to hold on to one another and no longer having to put on a strong face in front of the lords, now letting their fear of the war and all the risks of Jace’s absence express itself. Visenya’s head was pressed to her brother’s chest, and he had his arms wrapped around her, holding her close.

“You’ll be safe?” She whispered into his chest and Jace gave an attempt at a strong and confident ‘Yes’. “And you’ll write? You can’t forget to write me. You’re leaving me so you have to write.” She choked out and she felt him nod into her hair.

“I’ll write to you as often as I can, Vis. I won’t forget, I could never forget.” He pulled back and reached his hand up to brush her tears away and smooth her wild curls away from her wet face. “We’ll be alright, *Mandia* .” *Sister* . “Everything will be alright, I will win the Eyrie and the North and come

home, back to you and we will be wed, and everything will be alright.” He brought his forehead down to touch hers and they both closed their eyes, trying to enjoy these last few moments together. “I love you.” He whispered to her, so soft she almost lost his words to the wind. Her eyes snapped open, and her eyes filled with tears as she stared into his pale purple eyes.

“I love you too.” She whispers and he gives her a smile before bringing his hands to either side of her face and tilting her chin up to bring her lips to meet his in the softest, sweetest kiss imaginable. He pulled away after a few moments and stared into each other’s eyes, soft little gasping breaths filling the air.

“My Prince! My lady Princess!” Ser Erryk called from down the battlements, and they separated from one another- their hands remaining linked, however. “The Queen needs to speak with you.” Slowly they made the trek down the highest level of the ramparts and down to the middle where their mother awaited.

The three eldest children of Rhaenyra Targaryen stood before her.

“It’s been said that as Targaryens, we are closer to gods than to men. And the Iron Throne puts us a touch closer, perhaps.” their mother began, Ser Erryk just behind her and each of the siblings stood listening intently. “But, if we are to serve the Seven Kingdoms, we must answer to their gods. Jace, Luke, if you take this errand, you go as messengers, not as warriors. You must take no part in any fighting. Swear it to me now under the eyes of the Seven.” She looks down at the boys with soft, begging gazes, imploring them to remain out of any trouble and Ser Erryk steps forward, the enormous book of the Faith of the Seven held in his arms. The boys observe the look on their mother’s face and quickly place their hands on the book in Ser Erryk’s hands.

“I swear it.” Jace promises

“I swear it.” Luke repeats and Muna’s face softens with relief.

“Thank you,” she murmurs before handing a rolled message to Jace.

“Cregan Stark is closer to your age than to mine. I would hope that as men

you can find some common interest.” she smiles at him and Jace gives her a confident nod of his head and a quick bow.

“Yes, Your Grace.” he answers, his hand slipping into Visenya’s and giving it a quick squeeze that she returns. Their mother catches the action and gives them a loving smile, so soft and so proud before turning to Luke who stands so small and so nervous.

“Storm’s End is a short flight from here. You have Baratheon Blood from your grandmother, Rhaenys.” Luke nods and shifts anxiously. “And Lord Borros is an eternally proud man. He will be honored to host a prince of the realm, and his dragon.” Mother hands him the remaining message in her hand and gives him a reassuring smile. “I expect you will receive a very warm welcome.” Luke stares up at their mother and bites his lips worriedly before giving a shaky nod and a bow as he tries to copy Jace’s actions and appear as a proper Prince.

“Yes, Mother. Y-Your Grace.” He stutters out and Muna gives him the biggest smile possible, reaching out and squeezing his hand before letting him and Jace go.

Visenya remains on the ramparts with her mother, and they stand in silence before Visenya turns on her mother with a hurt look.

“You didn’t trust me with a mission. I am your second born child, I ride Vermithor, I’m the best warrior and yet you don’t trust me to rally your supporters?” She asks her mother, an almost accusing and betrayed tone in her words.

“I need you here, my darling.” Her mother turns to face her and takes her hands. “My darling girl, you are my most ferocious and brave child and I need you here by my side. Your sister needs to bond with a dragon, and I need you to help her to claim one. Out of your siblings you are the best dragonrider and you are the one your father and I trust to help your sister.” Visenya understood her mother's thinking, truly she did. She understood why her mother would want her to remain here to help Rhaena learn how to claim a dragon you are not born with but that does not mean the stab of hurt in her chest has completely faded. “Please do not be angry my sweet girl.”

Muna whispered, pulling Visenya into a tight hug. "With your father and brothers gone I am in desperate need of your strength." Visenya's arms came up around her mother and hugged her back, nodding into her mother's shoulder.

"I'll help you, Muna. I promise." Muna pulled back and brushed away one of Visenya's curls.

"Thank you." She smiled at her and Visenya returned it. The shrieks of dragons filled the air and Visenya turned with her mother to watch as Meleys and Vermax soared out over the Keep and were then joined by Arrax from beneath. The three dragons flew high and together for only a moment before splitting off, Vermax shooting off to the North, Meleys turning to one side and Arrax to the other. Visenya watched Arrax and frowned before turning to her mother.

"About Lord Borros," she began, and her mother hummed and raised an eyebrow, curious as to what Visenya would say. "As we said, he is a proud man, and I don't think that simply sending Luke and reminding him of his father's oath will be good enough. His pride will demand he not be bound to his father's oath and that he instead negotiates for his own benefit." Muna's brows furrowed.

"Then what do you suggest?"

"Terms must be given to him; he needs to feel valued- wanted. His lady wife died almost a year ago and he has taken no bride. We can offer Rhaena as the offer of a Royal bride is one so sweet that not many would pass over." In her head she sent an apology to her sister. "If he does not wish to marry Rhaena I have another suggestion." She waited for her mother's nod of permission and continued. "Lord Borros has a daughter of thirteen that he has struggled to find a betrothal for as no man wants a fourth girl. Joffrey is only two and a half years younger than her and is a prince. Kepa has already named Joff as the heir to the entirety of his Pentoshi fortune and we could put the Stepstones under Joff's control when he comes of age- meaning all the trade tax will be his. We offer Joff as Lady Floris's betrothed and with the promise of his fortune I cannot see Lord Borros passing it over." She gripped her mother's hand eagerly, so sure of her

words. “He will not turn down our demand for his help if we give him these two choices, Muna. I know this will work.” The queen nodded slowly before her nod became surer and more determined. She brought a hand up to Visenya’s cheek and stroked it softly and with pride.

“My darling, sweet, smart girl. Go write the letter and have a raven sent to Storm’s End. With any luck it will arrive while your brother is still there!” She then pressed a pleased kiss to Visenya’s cheek and squeezed her hand before leaving Visenya to go and follow her command.

“Yes Muna...” Visenya said as she watched her mother leave. And yet a part of her could not help but think that perhaps there was something better than sending a raven.

Storm’s End was... stormy. Lightning bolted through the sky and Arrax shrieked, falling to the side to avoid the bolt. His poor wings struggled against the battering of rain against them as the young dragon desperately tried to make his way through the storm and land safely. He emerged from a thick layer of clouds and Storm’s End stood tall and dominant against the storm, occupying the sky with its tall tower. Arrax soared around the tower to the courtyard where he slammed into the ground, safely landing and successfully getting him and his rider to their destination

None of the guards so much as flinch at the arrival of the dragon, remaining unmoved in the positions guarding the entrance to the keep. Luke tried to hide his slight trepidation- took keep her nerves in check- and he wondered why they remained so impassive.

His answer was quickly given when an ancient bellow cut through the thunder, echoing louder than the mighty storm that raged and Luke spun on his feet as fea gripped him.

There, towering over Storms End, larger than the keep itself, was Vhagar. Luke's stomach fell and his mouth filled with saliva as nausea began to fill him because Vhagar. And with Vhagar, came Aemond. He only prayed to the gods that Aemond was not yet inside the keep. He turns away from the sight of Vhagar, steeling himself remembering that his mother needs him right now- she needs him to be a Prince- and strides towards the four guards.

"I am Prince Lucerys Velaryon and I come with a message from my mother. The Queen." The guard closest to him nodded and gave a signal to the others. They all turned on their heels and with Luke in the middle of them, they strode into the Throne Room of Storms End.

The room is silent, a handful of lords and ladies stand to one side and on the Storm Throne sits Lord Borros dressed in brown, three of his daughters standing by his side. But it is not them who Luke's eyes are drawn to.

On the other side of the room stands the fourth of Lord Borros's daughters and beside her is a tall, leather and cloak clad man with hair of silvery gold. The man turns around and Luke finds himself staring into the face of Aemond, who's one eye bores into him and a vicious smirk curls over his lips.

The nausea reaches a peak in Luke's stomach at the look on Aemond's face and he resists the urge to lick his lips nervously before turning back to Lord Borros, desperately trying to ignore his vengeful, hateful uncle.

"Prince Lucerys Velaryon, Son of Princess Rhaenrya Targaryen." The guard announced and Luke cleared his throat to speak.

"Lord Borros, I have brought you a message from my mother, the Queen." His words were met with stony silence and Aemond's lips quirked up even further a look of dark amusement coming across his face. Lord Borros gave an amused chuckle.

"Yet earlier this day, I received an envoy from the King. Which is it? King or Queen? The House of the Dragon does not seem to know who rules it." Lord Borros's laugh rang throughout the hall as if he found himself terribly

amusing and Luke had to remind himself not to roll his eyes and that it would do him no favors in winning the prideful lord. “What’s your mother’s message?” Luke holds up his hand with the message in it and one of the guards takes it before presenting it to his lord. Lord Borros does not even attempt to unroll the parchment before yelling for his maester. The awkward silence fills the room again as they wait for the maester to appear, and then for him to read the message and report its contents to Lord Borros. The maester whispers the message in his ear and Luke watches a mirage of emotions flit across his face- amusement, incredulousness, and then the one Luke dreaded to see, a look of offense.

“Remind me of my father’s oath!” His voice roams out in outrage, his voice loud and raging. “King Aegon at least came with an offer: my swords and banners for a marriage pact. But your mother, if I do what she bids what do I gain? Which one of my daughters will you wed, boy?” Luke swallows hard and tries to keep his voice level as he denies the Storm Lord.

“My lord, I am not free to marry. I am already betrothed to Princess Baela.” Lord Borros scoffed, and a cold and dark chuckle came from where Aemond stood.

“So you come to me with empty hands?” Lord Borros sneered, and Luke’s mouth opened but he had no idea as to what to say, not wanting to fail his mother but not sure as to what he was to say.

But a loud roar pierces through the air and dominates the air around them, commanding attention and causing many of the lords and ladies, including a lord Borros to flinch back.

It is a roar Luke knows- not the shrill shriek of Arrax, or the ancient rumbles of Vhagar. No, this is unearthly and powerful roar of a mighty beast in his prime. A smile comes over Luke’s face. Footsteps pound up the stairs and the doors heave open and Luke sees the dark and smug smirk of satisfaction fall off the face of his uncle Aemond- Luke turns and there stands his sister, Princess Visenya Velaryon, dressed in riding leathers, a sword by her side, and a crown on her head.

The lords and ladies of Storms End dip into quick bows and curtsies and even Lord Borros dips his head as she strides into the room, walking straight past the guards and comes to stand before her brother.

She knows Aemond is there, she saw him out of the corner of her eye, felt his presence in the room and the burning intensity of his gaze upon her when she had entered the Hall. But she did not look at him, she did not acknowledge him or acknowledge the fire that ignited in her at the knowledge that he stands on the either side of the room from her. That it would only take a moment for her to draw her sword and cross the room to drive it through his traitorous, black heart.

“Princess Visenya!” Lord Borros calls to her. “Your presence here is unexpected. I was just about to send your brother back home. It seems that your mother does not truly appreciate the Lord of the Storms. The Greens have offered me a marriage- Prince Aemond to wed my daughter Ellyn. And yet I receive no such honors from your mother.” But Visenya only smiles at his harsh words. Not the cruel smile she directs at Aemond, the little and giggly one she has with her siblings, but the dazzling smile she uses as the Princess of the Kingdoms.

“Lord Borros, it pains me to hear that you think my family does not appreciate you. This truly makes me wonder how much we must have neglected our family bonds with you. My dear cousin,” She stepped forwards, her eyes wide and earnest. “My mother the Queen has sent me with terms of negotiation to show just how dear you and your House are to our hearts.”

Lord Borros now sat up, looking far more eager to hear the suit of the Blacks and he gestured for her to continue, clearly taking great pleasure in having the two warring Targaryen factions fighting for his hand.

“Our first offer is for your own hand. I know your wife, the Lady Elenda passed away and you have been left without a lady wife. The Queen offers you the hand of a Princess. Princess Rhaena Targaryen has remained unbetrothed and now we come before you with an offer of her hand in marriage.” Any look of offense melted away from his face as a look of contemplation took its place, the offer of a royal bride far too tempting, as

Visenya had predicted it would be. “However, out of respect for your grief we have come with a second offer, if you should choose to remain unmarried. Your daughter, the Lady Floris is at a proper age to be betrothed now and I know you have found immense struggles in your attempts to find a lord for her that is suitable for her name. Queen Rhaenyra offers you a Prince for your daughter.” Visenya then casts a distasteful look at Aemond. “And unlike the Greens, we offer you a son who stands with much to inherit. My brother, Prince Joffrey Velaryon stands to inherit the Pentoshi lands, holdings, and monies that King Consort Daemon Targaryen compiled in his residency there. Not only that, but with the war in the Stepstones at an end, Joffrey will also one day inherit the trade routes of the Narrow Sea, making him one of the richest men in Westeros. The Queen would expect no dowry for your daughter either, considering your support as payment enough. Should you accept, my mother the Queen has also agreed to have him foster here when he reaches his majority.”

“You honor me with these terms, Princess. I see now that I was wrong to assume your mother did not truly appreciate the Stormlands.” Lord Borros says, his hand coming up to stroke his beard as he begins to consider which side is most advantageous to him. Visenya watched as Aemond’s mouth opened to speak and she quickly stepped forward, speaking before he got the chance to ruin her hard work.

“House Baratheon and House Targaryen have stood as once since the Conquest, our fates forever intertwined. When the Great Council was called and my grandmother’s inheritance was put to question, your house was ready to call its banners and rise for your Baratheon-Targaryen Queen. And now I offer you the chance to do so again, raise your banners to Queen Rhaenyra’s call and know that one day, the Blood of House Baratheon will rule as king.” Her voice was impassioned as she made her final claim and when she looked in his eyes, she knew she had won the Stormlands. Greed and ambition- as well as the pride of being able to claim his blood was on the Throne- was brimming in his eyes and a slow smile had begun to creep across his face. He clapped his hands and let out a bellowing laugh of satisfaction.

“Very well cousin!” he exclaimed. “My daughter will wed your brother Joffrey and House Baratheon will raise its banners to Queen Rhaenyra. Let your brother carry this news back to your mother and you and I can sign the pact and confirm the oaths.” Luke nodded, a smile coming over his face at his sister’s success and he began to turn, to make his way to Arrax when the quiet voice of Prince Aemond rang out.

“Wait.... My Lord Strong.” The hall freezes, Luke pausing in his steps and Visenya’s spine stiffening, her shoulders rolling back as if in answer to his voice and she slowly turns in his direction. (He does not look at her, nor she directly at him and she wonders if he finds it as hard as she does to look at his face. That for some horrid reason she burns at the sharp lines and elegant features of his face). “Do you really think I will let you just fly around the realm, trying to steal my brother’s throne at no cost?” His voice is deep, dark and it rolls over Visenya only feeding the fire in her veins. She shifts, beginning to slowly and subtly move so that she came to stand by the side of her brother, ready to protect him from their vengeful uncle.

“I will not fight you. I came as a messenger, not a warrior.” Luke refutes, his voice shaky and yet brave all the same.

“A fight would be little challenge. No...” Aemond hums and Visenya feels her hand drift towards her sword hilt. “I want you to put out your eye.” He pulls his eyepatch off and reveals the pure sapphire that now rests in his eye socket that is covered by the large scar they had once inflicted on him. (That low fire in her belly appeared again, her spine tingling at the sight) Visenya’s chest tightened, and she moved, fully by Luke’s side, a clear threat to her uncle that she would defend her brother. She saw the moment her message was received because his jaw clenched, his left thumb rubbing against his other fingers (his tells of anger she knew so well). “I want it as payment for mine. One will serve, I will not blind you.” She sees that small smirk curl over his lips, and he gives a low ‘mm’. “I plan to make it a gift to my mother.”

“No!” Luke cries and Visenya shoves him behind her.

“Then you are craven as well as a bastard. You will give me your eye and perhaps your sister can hold you down while it is cut out, like she did me!”

Aemond snarled, an almost insane tone taking over him. He took a menacing step forward as if he were seconds from lunging at Luke.

“Gaomagon daor ilimagho issa muñnykeā. Nyke kostagon emagon ojūdan nykeā laes, yn nyke emagon gained nykeā zaldrīzes!” Do not mourn me, mother, I may have lost an eye, but I have gained a dragon. The High Valyrian rings out over the room, and Aemond takes a visible step back at the sound of it. Visenya snarls every word at him, spitting his own words back in his face with a vengeance. She knows her words, that the language falling off her tongue, are a shock to his system, for Aemond has not heard High Valyrian from her lips in ten years. (The sound of it shoots his spine with chills and his blood lights on fire. Her voice is powerful, raw, and commanding in Valyrian and he longs to hear it again.) “You let go of any claim for justic ten years ago when you said those words Uncle. You do not get to renege on them now just because it does not suit you or because you have grown bitter.” She now has taken a step forward, almost as if in challenge as she spits at him and she sees the rage take a hold of him.

“Se mērī ñuhoso naejot jiōragon nykeā zaldrīzes iksos naejot gūrogon mēre nykēla. Lo ao jaelagon nykeā zaldrīzes ao emagon naejot gūrogon ziry! Nyke jeldan nykeā zaldrīzes sīr nyke jiōraton nykēla mēre se sir jurnegon. Nyke kipagon se dārys hen zaldrīzoti.” The only way to get a dragon is to take one myself. if you want a Dragon you have to take it! I wanted a dragon, so I got myself one and now look. I ride the king of the dragons. He throws her own words at her as well. (Her words he had clung to for days after she claimed Vermithor. The words he held on to as he claimed Vhagar, as he justified it to himself.) and Visenya gives an incredulous scoff of a laugh.

“Ao gaomagon daor jiōragon naejot blame issa syt skorion massitas, Bona tubis.” You do not get to blame me for what happened that day. The rest of the room, the rest of the world has disappeared as she and Aemond finally fight over what happened so many years ago.

“Ao issi naejot blame. Ao issi naejot blame syt everything bona massitas naejot issa!” You are to blame. You are to blame for everything that happened to me! He snarled every word, and she reared back as if she had been slapped. How could he say she was to blame when his murderous

actions towards Jace that night were the root of Luke's own actions? She goes to demand the answer from him, but he has already turned back to Luke.

"I demand my payment!" The quiet rage in his voice caused his voice to take on an unsteady tone.

"Not here!" Lord Borros called but none of the dragons heeded his orders.

"Give me your eye or I will take it, bastard!" He screams the rage pouring out of his voice and overpowering him as he charges forward, scooping the knife he had thrown at Luke off the floor and coming at him. Visenya unsheathes her sword, Luke doing the same behind her.

"NOT IN MY HALL!" Lord Borros yells and they all stop, finally hearing the words of the Storm Lord as they break through the fiery and bloody haze of the dragons' rage. "The boy came as an envoy; I'll not have bloodshed beneath my roof. Take Prince Lucerys back to his dragon. Now!" Luke slowly sheathed his sword and let the guards escort him out while Visenya stood between him and Aemond to ensure he safely made it out.

Aemond only gave that bloodthirsty and cruel smirk before twirling the knife across his hand and wrist before sheathing it. When Luke was gone from the hall, Lord Borros then gave the command for Aemond to be escorted out- which he obliged with that godsdamned smirk and Visenya remained to settle the terms.

That dragonfire courses through Aemond's blood, the demand for blood and for vengeance clouds his senses, commanding him to tear out Lucerys's eye, to make him feel the same rage and terror Aemond had felt so many years ago (the insult only added by the dinner only a few nights ago where Lucerys had laughed at him).

When Visenya had entered the hall that other fire had coursed through his veins as well, the sight of his niece burning through him and sending ripples of pain, fury, and betrayal through him while she commanded attention from the room and stole Storms End from his grasp- just when he had thought himself successful.

It was this rage that had him climbing up Vhagar and chasing Luke through the skies, like some demon in the night, hounding him through the storm, feeling that delicious and cruel delight as he watched Luke fill with desperation and panic as Vhagar had bursts through the clouds, buzzing Arrax and terrorizing the young dragon. He let out a cruel laugh, enjoying the fear on his nephew's face as he desperately flew away from Aemond. He felt Vhagar's rage mounting as she snapped at the dragon and he revelled in it, laughing as his dragon- the mightiest fucking dragon alive- terrorized his bastard of a nephew. His insane laugh only grows as Luke desperately flies between two giant rocks that stand jaggedly from the water, granting him a few moments of peace from Vhagar.

"Ao enkagon nykeā gēlȳn, valonqar! You owe a debt, boy. He yells into the wind with another laugh, and he hears the young dragon give a panicked screech. He continued to urge Vhagar along, having her snap at and chase the young dragon and encouraging her irritation at the round dragon. They soar over the sea and Vhagar flaps her wings, rising into the sky in search of their target. For a moment Aemond wondered if the young dragon had managed to escap but then Arrax comes shooting out of the clouds with Luke screaming at him to stop and fire pours out of his mouth, burning Vhagar's head.

His connection with Vhagar frays immediately- strain coming over it and he feels his control of her slip. Her mind separates from his and she shakes off his commands, no longer heeding his words and now immersed in her own hunt, her own drive for vengeance, clearly furious at the insult of the young dragon for attacking her. She snapped her head to the side and roared with anger before immediately flying to follow Arrax- and he felt it ring in his soul what Vhagar wanted. She was going for the Kill. He kept trying to scream at her in Valyrian to serve, to obey but the ancient dragon did not heed his words, still charging after Arrax and Luke.

Visenya had emerged from Storms End to hear the shrieks and roars of dragons and she had known immediately that Aemond had not let Luke leave in peace. (She knows Aemond, she knows he has probably gone to chase Luke, to terrorize him and set fear into his heart in revenge). She raced over the Vermithor and began to climb on top of him, the dragon gave rumble at the panic he felt from her, and she began to pour her desperation and worry for her brother into her bond with Vermithor.

“Arghugon Luke!” Hunt Luke! She screamed into the winds, knowing without a doubt that Vermithor could find her brother. He gave an echoing roar in response and shot into the air, blazing through the skies in a desperate search for his rider’s brother. The storm raged and battered against the, only serving to further Visenya's desperation and fear the longer it took to find her brother. Vermithor soared through different clouds trying to find Arrax and Luke but he remained unsuccessful, beginning to roar as a call for the young dragon to heed.

A flash of fire appears above her and the furious roar of Vhagar echoes. Visenya's stomach drops as Arrax screeches, and she knows Arrax has just attacked Vhagar, that the baby dragon panicked and attacked the furious Dragon Queen, she begins to pray that Aemond can gain control, that he can stop Vhagar from following and from killing. That his bond with the Dragon Queen would be as good as he always bragged he would have with his dragon when they were children. But Visenya hears Aemond begin to shout at Vhagar, screaming desperate commands and her stomach sinks further- he has lost control of a centuries old War Dragon who is now going to find and kill Arrax- and Luke with him.

“Hurry Vermithor!” Common tongue slips out in her panic, but she knows her bonded one understands her anyways and she feels him pick up speed, following as fast as possible up after Arrax and Vhagar in a desperate search. They finally emerge from the horrors of the storms into clear skies and Visenya spots Luke. *“LUKE!”* She screams out to him, trying to get his

attention so he can lead Arrax to fly safely beside Vermithor, knowing Vhagar will think twice before challenging a dragon who is close to her own size. His head turns to look for her and relief shines on his face.

"VISENYA!" Luke cries out and he tugs on Arrax's reins, pulling the dragon to urge it towards Vermithor.

But it is far too late and Vhagar emerges from the clouds beneath them. The ancient Dragon flies at Arrax, going in for the kill her mouth hanging open as she lunges. A scream of horror leaves Visenya's mouth at the scene. Arrax rolls to the side, desperate to dodge, to possibly escape but he is caught in the mouth of the she-dragon and torn to pieces in moments, his bloody and shredded body falling through the sky.

"NO!" Aemond roars at Vhagar and Vermithor shrieks at his rider's pain. Horror and fury has taken hold of Visenya when she sees and hears it. In Arrax's roll he had thrown Luke, sending the boy flying through the air and towards the sea beneath them his screams echoing up for her to hear and she tugs at Vermithor.

"DIVE VERMITHOR!" She screams and he drops, his wings tucking in, and he shoots down after Luke, gaining on the quickly falling form of the boy until he is almost by him. Visenya undoes the chains around her waist and begins to scoot as carefully as she dares towards Vermithor's wing (a move similar to one she had practiced with Kepa in their mock battles so that she could jump from Vermithor to a different dragon to possibly kill an opponent if need be), securing herself between his many horns and spikes before extending her hand. "ROLL! NOW!" And he does in an instant, rolling to the side and Visenya comes side to side with Luke, her arm straining out and by the mercy and grace of the Ancient Gods her hand grabs his shirt, and she gives an almighty heave. Vermithor senses what she is doing and levels back out, bringing his wings up to help aid his beloved rider in saving her brother and pulling him to safety on the back of the Bronze Fury. Vhagar flies past them and Visenya cannot help it, she screams her fury at Aemond, hoping he feels fear in his blood and dread in his bones at what she will do to him.

“Ao emagon rhēdan nykeā vīlībāzma ao daor hope naejot ērinagon!” You have started a war you cannot hope to win! Visenya screams and Vhagar roars back at them and Vermithor snarls in return, the two dragons seconds away from lunging for each other's throats while Visenya glares with pure hatred at Aemond who looks at her blood covered form with, is that horror? Surprise? Shock that the consequences of his fucking actions, of his fooling around caught up with him.

She feels the urge rising in her, the urge to spit the command and send Vermithor flying at Vhagar to rip her throat out, to begin a Dragon Dance in the sky and murder the she-dragon and her cruel, would be Kinslayer of an uncle who dared to do this. The battered and bloody body of her brother sits over her lap as she weighs her choices on Vermithor, to fight or to fly as fast as possible home. *War, war, blood, fire and blood*, her mind whispers and she almost succumbs to it. But Luke lets out a weak, shudder of a breath with a moan as if he were dying and she reaches down to feel Luke's heartbeat is practically nonexistent and his parts of his left side are a mass of ruined flesh and gushing blood.

In that second, she chooses, she will face and kill Aemond another day but now, now she must try and save her brother. And so she yanks at Vermithor's rope, and they fly, fast as possible to Dragonstone.

“Luke, no. Luke.” She whispers in panic as she rips off pieces of her clothing and tries to stop the bleeding. “Please.” She prays to the gods. “Please don't take another one from me.” She begs and prays that she gets to Dragonstone and the Maester in time to save Luke. She has lost Grandfather, lost Aemma before she even got to know her, had been separated from Jace, the gods could not take Luke from her now- they could not rip her beloved brother away from her. She prays for vengeance and for the blood of Aemond Targaryen for what he has done, and she hopes he knows that she will come for him.

That he would do this, engage in actions that he knew could result in Luke's death with a mighty dragon he could not control? That his actions would lead to Vhagar lunging through the sky and slaughtering Arrax and trying to kill her brother? Mother had not wanted to land the first blow, and she had

not needed to. Fire and Blood would come for the Greens, for Aemond Targaryen.

The aching fire in her stomach toward him had been burned away in her rage and desperation for her brothers life. And all that remained in his ashes was that horrible, gut wrenching, hate that filled her veins. Gods she hated Aemond Targaryen- for he had truly sunk so low in his petty need for revenge that he had possibly killed Luke for an insult almost 10 years ago.

(Leather, sweat, citrus, lemon cakes, his thigh between her legs. Burned from her mind.)

(Luke's scream of terror, him plummeting through the sky, his bloody and broken body in her arms replacing those images instead, odd twisting in her gut gone now and all that remained was a stone cold pit of loathing).

if that was the way he wanted to play things then that was fine, Visenya could sink lower. She could rip just as much away from the Greens as they had her family. She could hurt Aemond as much as he had hurt her.

He ranted and raved about an eye for an eye?

She would return this favor to him as he had done to Luke.

An eye for an eye.

One loss for another.

Bathed in Blood

Chapter Notes

So here I am with a quick chapter lol. While you guys read this one I am writing the follow up which will probably be 3k-4k!

I took a break for a minute for 2 reasons: 1, there were a lot of hate comments, and it was really starting to get me. 2, I had a bad medication interaction post operation and stopped breathing for a minute.

I'm all good now though!! Please Enjoy!!!

Also on spotify I made my playlist of what songs I listen to when I write. The name of the playlist is the name of the story so if any of yall are interest go check it out but idk how to make that shit public or whatever so here's the link!

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3kStlhTdsM5STIBHsJ6h9u?si=db20d7b3cf864cee>

Blood, ruby red and bright with how fresh it is, stains the sheets, stains the stone of the floor, the fabric of her riding habit, the gold of her skin. There is so much blood, the blood that gives precious Lucerys life and Visenya stands in the doorways gasping for breath as the maesters shout different orders and work as fast as possible to save her brother's life. Muna stands over the bed, being held up by Ser Lorent who tries his utmost to support his Queen in her need. Ser Erryk hovered over Visenya, not that she really noticed his panicked air beside her, simply trying to draw in breath and stay conscious was taking all her effort.

When Vhagar had struck and Arrax had rolled, the young dragon had saved his life, but not stopped Vhagar from mauling Luke. But had Arrax (had she) really saved his life? Because now instead of the quick death of being swallowed by Vhagar, he was dying a slow and agonizing death.

He had screamed a few times when the maester's first started their work- they had begun to cauterize many wounds to simply stop the blood- but now he had fallen silent and the only proof Visenya had that he was still alive was the fact that the maesters were still working.

At one point Joff had tried to come into the room, worried after several minutes of hearing Luke scream in pain but Ser Steffon had quickly grabbed him and taken him away, making sure that none of the younger children could find their way into the room where their brother lay mauled and bloody.

Someone was calling her name, but she wasn't really sure who because the world was hazy, sound was muffled, and air was increasingly hard to breathe. She continued to stare at the bloody bed and gasp until a hand gripped her chin and yanked her head to the side, forcing her gaze to move and she saw who was speaking to her. Rhaena. With wide, panicked eyes and desperation painting her features as she gripped Visenya's chin and shook her- trying to snap her out of her shock.

"VISENYA!" Snaps Rhaena and the sound finally manages to break through Visenya's ears and the noise rings in her head as she suddenly becomes hyperaware of what is going on. Of Muna's sobs and moans of devastation, of the maesters barking orders at each other, the sound of skin sizzling, Ser Erryk trying desperately to keep her standing, and Rhaena shaking her.

"Rhaena?" Visenya whispers and Rhaena nods her head with ferocity.

"Rhaena..." Visenya whispers out again and Rhaena squeezes her shoulders.

"I'm here sister." She whispers and yanks Visenya into a hug, cradling the back of Visenya's head in one of her hands. "Vis, are you hurt?" Rhaena asks gently as she hugs her and Visenya shakes her head into Rhaena's shoulder and Rhaena lets out a relieved sigh. They pull apart and stand with hands tightly clasped as they waited for the maesters to finish their work. It felt like hours until Maester Gerardys stood and wiped his brow before walking over to their mother- Visenya and Rhaena quickly hurrying to stand by her side and hear the maester's words.

“Your Grace, Princesses.” The maester nods grimly at them. “The Prince is alive for now however I cannot guarantee that he will remain that way. His condition is unstable, he has fallen comatose, and I fear he has lost too much blood to awaken. There is nothing more to do but wait and see.” The maester says and Muna lets out a sob, pressing a hand to her mouth, trying to stifle the next sob while Visenya’s eyes gloss over and she stumbles back, Ser Erryk quickly helping her upright (he had followed her and Rhaena so closely). Muna thanks the maesters and slowly, carefully as if she is afraid that by moving she will cause harm, she makes her way to Luke’s bedside.

“Luke-” Muna chokes out before dissolving into sobs at the state of her son’s body. “Oh my sweet boy.” She reaches a hand up and begins to stroke his soft, brown curls and whispers a thousand apologies to him. Visenya watches it a moment longer before she slowly shakes herself free from Rhaena and Ser Erryk who both look at her warily.

“I can’t- I, I don’t- I can’t-” She gasps and takes a quick step back and away from their reaching hands before spinning on her heels and quickly running (stumbling) out of the room that is plagued with the overbearing stench of blood and death.

“Visenya?” Calls Rhaena but Visenya shakes her head and keeps running.

“PRINCESS!” Ser Erryk shouts as he begins to run after her. But however fast he is matters not because Visenya knows the secrets of the keep and so she quickly loses him as she slips into one of the many tunnels. Visenya knows she should return to her kingsguard and her sister, her mother but she does not. Her mind is a jumbled mess and there is barely a coherent thought inside it.

How had this happened, how had this happened, how could she have allowed this to happen? How could she have allowed this to happen to her precious little brother? How had she failed him so terribly. She should have been there sooner, should have insisted he wait until she finished with Lord Borros. She should have done something more. Anything more. Anything but what she did that allowed this to happen.

This was all her fault, wasn't it?

Her fault.

Her failure.

She had failed Luke; she had failed in her role as his elder sister. He could die, he could fade away, never to wake up and Muna would be devastated. She had suffered too many losses already and now another? He could die and it was all Visenya's fault. Had her presence at Storm's End only served to anger Aemond further so that he gave chase to Luke? She had been so furious with him earlier, raging against him and blaming it all on Aemond as she screamed at him in the sky but now, she could not shake his words from the Hall.

How he had spat her words back at her, the words she had uttered ten years ago in comfort to him when she had claimed a dragon and yet he still had none. "If you want a dragon you have to take it." He had taken the words she had spoken as if they were holy words from the gods themselves and he had followed them to the letter, claiming Vhagar all for himself because seven-year-old Visenya had told him to. She was nauseas. Oh gods, was she going to hurl right here on the stairs she was climbing in desperate search for air that was easy to breath.

But her horror began to flip as she stumbled up the stairs and as the air began to come easier to her. Her horror turned to fury again (her guilt remained; she knew she would never rid of it no matter how she tried.) How could Aemond blame her words for the words she spoke at the age of seven, faulting her as if he were not the elder and more mature of them? Had he not changed in all these years that he was still that horrible creature of vengeance that demanded Luke's blood, that demanded his pride be satiated, and damn the rest of them to get it?

(Her blood had trilled at the sight of him, at the sound of his rough voice speaking Valyrian and yet now it curdled, horrified at the actions that he had so carelessly done and the damage he had wrecked upon their family, as well as the realm because she knew all thoughts of peace had fled her mother's mind.)

She was horrified, furious, terrified, vengeful. She was a swirling vortex of bloodlust and traumatized ice-cold fear that tumbled about inside her and gripped her heart so tightly that she could scarcely hear her footsteps over the pounding of her heart.

She burst through the door at the top of the stairs and collapsed on the ground of the room. She knelt on her knees and curled into a ball and began to sob. Gut wrenching, heart stopping sobs that aired her feelings to the room around her. How horrible it had been to see Vhagar tear Arrax to pieces, to watch Luke plummet through the sky as she raced to catch him, to fly home covered in his blood and feel as his heartbeat began to fade, and life began to leave him. Stumbling off Vermithor's back to greet her mother with the dying form of Luke.

She sobbed for what could have been minutes, hours, or even days. She did not know, nor did she care as she sat in her clothes sticky with Luke's blood as her mind forced her to relive those moments over and over and over again. Her limbs tingled and filled with that horrible mix of both numbness and little shocks. She felt both trapped in her body and yet she was floating above it at the same time- as if she were hovering over her crying form and watching what happening. Desperate for the numbness to go away, to feel something- anything- she dug her nails into her arms and ripped them downwards, causing deep red lines to appear on the skin that only grew darker and darker as she continued the process over and over again. Her strength began to fail her and she slowly fell from her curled position on her knees, to collapse on the ground, laying on her side.

Her tears began to slow, coming to a stop and so she just lay there.

When Visenya woke up her tears had stopped, her mind no longer scrambled, and all that remained inside her was numbness. She sat there on the floor and wondered if Luke had died in the night (or if she had even slept that long). She stood and made no attempt to brush the dust off

because what was a little dust when you were caked in the dried blood of your dying brother.

For the first time she truly beheld the room she was in. It was a room that was as old as their dynasty itself and possibly older. The room was covered in a thick layer of dust, heavy with the stench of being unused for what was perhaps centuries. There were dried stains on the floor- probably some gods awful liquid that had dried up ages ago and Visenya didn't even want to know what it was. Around the room where fourteen stone columns with runes engraved up and down them and in front of each column stood a bronze brazier. Visenya slowly walked towards the two columns in the center and as she drew closer she noted exactly what the runes on the columns said. The runes were of prayer, praise, and the stories of the Ancient Gods of Old Valyria and the two in front of Visenya were marked for Arrax and Balerion, the King of the Gods and the God of Death.

Visenya had found the room where their ancestors used to worship their gods. She let out a hoarse and gravelly laugh as she reached out and traced the rune for Arrax- half expecting to be struck down by the furious lightning of the gods for daring to touch their runes but she was not. Arrax, Luke had been so fond of the name thinking it would be the best name possible to give his baby dragon when they were younger having been fascinated with the idea of having a dragon named after the king of the old Valyrian gods.

She scoffed, bitterness taking a hold of her, it was not like the name had done any good for now Arrax the dragon was dead. That same bitterness inside her spoke with a voice teeming with scorn as it sneered at her that maybe the gods had taken her brother from her as payment for her greed and ambition. That this was the price she paid for her anger being passed over for the Driftwood Throne. That the gods had heard her anger and taken Luke.

Was that what had happened? Had her greed, her constant desire for power led to her brother's death? Was he to be some sort of sacrifice that had to be made in order for her to achieve what she wanted? No, Visenya thought fiercely. She would never sacrifice Luke for the Driftwood Throne. He was her brother; her blood and she had spent years fiercely loving and defending

him. She would never turn her back on him. She would give anything for him to wake up, for him to open his beautiful brown eyes and take a breath. For him to live.

Unbidden the words fire and blood rose in her mind. Fire and Blood. A warning? An offering? A spell of Queen Visenya and the other Dark Magic users of their family so many years ago? Fire and Blood, the words of her house, the words of a prayer, a promise.

Slowly Visenya lowered herself to the ground, bringing herself to her knees before the column and brazier of Balerion, her knees resting among what she was sure were remnants of bones that rested at the foot of his alter. She turned her head upwards and placed her hands on the alter the brazier stood on and she began, with all her strength and with all her soul, to bargain for her brother's life from the Ancient God of Death.

Do not take him from me. Please. She hissed in her mind. *Please, he does not deserve to die- especially not like this. Do not take him as a sacrifice for mine own faults, for my ambition. Please.* She begged over and over, her desperation beginning to grow.

“Perzys se ānogar.” Fire and Blood, she spoke, her voice ringing hollowly around the room. “Nyke jāhor gaomagon mirros. Nyke jāhor maghagon vīlībāzma bē se dārȳti se nyke jāhor maghagon ao nykeā offering hen perzys se ānogar.” I will do anything; I will bring war upon the Seven Kingdoms and I will bring you an offering of fire and blood. She gripped the stone of the alter so tightly that the skin of her palms cut open and her blood seeped onto the stone, slowly dripping down, staining the deepest red as it cut a path upon the alter. *“Nyke jāhor dōrī covet skoros iksos zȳhon arlī. Kostilus sepār spare issa lēkia” I will never covet what is his again. Please, just spare my brother.*

She remained there a moment longer, forehead pressed to the cold and ancient stone, hoping that the Ancient gods were still awake, that they were still listening, and that they would accept her plea, her bargain, her promise. Her eyes squeezed shut for a second before she slowly stood, hauling herself up to stand on weak and shaky legs (which only served to remind her that she had gone so long without food and water.) and she slowly

backed away and turned, making her way to the door and shutting it behind her as she stepped out.

The wind whistled and whispered in the staircase of the tower as she stood with her back to the door and for a moment it almost sounded as if the wind carried voices on its back but she shook her head and stumbled her way down the stairs, determined to return to her brother.

(Visenya's blood slowly dripped from the alter, mixing into the long dried blood and bones of the past, a bloody offering.)

She slowly makes her way down the stairs, now realizing she has no idea how she got up here or how to get back to where she came from and so she just walks, taking a long winding hall to her left. She walks up through the mouth of a tunnel and turns to her right and slams into the hard front of a stranger. Due to her shaky feelings mixed with her surprise at the collision, Visenya stumbled back only to be quickly gripped by the arms and stabilized.

"Princess?" a rough voice asked and Visenya's eyes trailed up the arms holding her up to the white and silver enameled breastplate on her chest, and further up to the bearded face of Ser Erryk. When he took in the sight of her face and the confirmation that it was indeed her, visible relief came over him and he sighed. "Oh thank the gods, it is you." It almost looked as if he were going to hug her in relief, but he restrained himself, settling for squeezing her arms. "Where have you been? We've been searching for you for hours, the whole Keep is worried, and are you bleeding?" He asked, taking notice of her bloodied palms and grabbing one to inspect it.

"I was resting." She answers, her voice still hoarse and he lets go of her hand, looking over her with worry (the poor Kingsguard- for generation after generation- were always running after royal children and were constantly stressed at the thought of losing their charges). The knight lets out a hum and moves slowly, coming behind her and helping to escort her through the long halls and back to her mother.

“...I want the Dragon Mount searched. Vermithor is still here but that does not mean she is not elsewhere on the isle or in the crevasses. I also want-” Queen Rhaenyra’s tired voice came to an abrupt halt as Ser Erryk brought Rhaenyra into Luke’s bedroom. Immediately Visenya noticed the faint rise and fall of her brother’s chest, and she almost collapsed into tears all over again at the realization that he had not died while she had slept. “Visenya!” Muna spoke her name as if it were the answer to a prayer, a saving grace, the way her voice dripped with relief and she quickly rushed over to Visenya, black skirts swishing around her legs, and enveloped her in a tight hug. “My precious girl, thank the gods.” She pulls back from the hug, brushing Visenya’s blood-crusted curls back to examine her face.

“I’m fine, Muna.” Visenya tries to reassure her, voice cracked and lips bloody with dehydration. “I just got lost trying and then I fell asleep.” She whispers out, guilt crashing back over her at the thought of how much unnecessary stress and worry her disappearance had probably caused her poor mother. Muna pulled her in for another hug, running a soothing hand through Visenya’s curls.

“Are you alright?” Muna whispered and Visenya nodded into her chest as her mother cradled her close. She pulled away from her mother and gestured to all the blood.

“It’s not mine, it’s-” she choked up, finding it hard to say Luke’s name aloud and her mother nodded.

“He’s still asleep, still as alright as he can be.” She told Visenya, turning back to check on Luke, as if leaving his side for only a few minutes could mean his death. Rhaena sat by his side, Luke’s hand clasped between her own and her lips moved as she prayed (or at least that is what Visenya thought she was doing). “You need to go and bathe; you cannot stay this way.” Mother brushed back another curl as she spoke and Visenya nodded, knowing her mother was right and now becoming hyperaware of the fact that her skin was caked in a layer of crusted and dried blood and the itchy feeling that came with it. She nodded again before looking down to examine her hands, the blood from the cuts on her palms still leaked out and the rest of her hands and under her nails were dried a rusted and horrible shade of red, brown, and black that had nausea curling in her once more. A

chair scraped against the ground and Rhaena stood, walking over to them and taking one of Visenya's arms into her own.

"Come, Vis. We'll get you cleaned up." Her sister spoke to her in a gentle yet slightly commanding voice and Visenya gave her a grateful look as she pulled her out of the room, poor Ser Erryk following closely behind. Rhaena guided them down the hall and opened one of the doors which led to Visenya's apartment, pulling her inside and nodding to Ser Erryk as he took up post at the door, shutting it behind them as they entered.

"It's so itchy." Visenya muttered and Rhaena let out a soft exhale. "I didn't even care until a few minutes ago."

"You were in shock. You probably still are." Her sister responded as the maids began to fill the tub and Rhaena helped her to sit down in a chair and began to help unlace her ruined riding habit. Her boots were unlaced first, the tight black shoes taking several minutes to entirely loosen and unlace as well as pull off of her feet. She was then pulled into a standing position and felt as her sister's gentle fingers pulled her coat off.

It took a few more minutes but Visenya was finally undressed and began walking towards the tub, stepping into the overwhelmingly hot water while Rhaena dismissed the maids. The warmth of the water soothed her and the more she sank into it the more Visenya began to feel like herself- slowly her mind sharpening and her senses strengthening.

Rhaena scooped the water into a wooden cup and poured it into her hair, watching as her silver curls fell straight in the soaking wet and as the blood dripped down and out of it. While Rhaena worked on her hair, Visenya worked on scrubbing the blood out of her fingernails and off her arms, her neck, and wherever else she found it.

"What is Storm's End like?" Rhaena asks after a while and Visenya begins to giggle, she can't help it. The way Rhaena tries to alleviate the horrid tense atmosphere that swept through when Visenya came falling off Vermithor caked in Luke's blood. She tilts her head back to smile fondly at her sister, considering her answer.

“Dark. Rainy. Very rainy. And windy.” She replies after a few moments of silence and Rhaena nods seriously.

“I never would have guessed that with a name like Storm’s End.” She cracks a smile as she looks down at Visenya who grins back, truly appreciating her relationship with her sister in this moment. Their bond, Rhaena’s understanding of her emotions and how she knew to pull Visenya’s mind from the unfathomable depths of its guilt and to distract her. “And Lord Borros? What’s he like?”

“Just as I predicted.” Visenya shrugged as she rose from the pink water, reaching for her towel and wrapping herself in it. “He is prideful, has an overinflated sense of self-importance, and very much enjoying House Targaryen fighting for his support.” She began to walk into her bedchamber and dry off. “He was even considering joining the Greens.” Rhaena gaped at her as she pulled one of Visenya’s deep purple dresses out of her wardrobe and set it on the table.

“We are his kin!” Rhaena exclaimed and Visenya only shrugged again as she finished drying off and began pulling on her underclothes. “He would have turned on us? On his cousins?” Visenya snorted.

“Of course, he would. Family meant nothing to him, what mattered was the marriage proposal and coin I offered for a daughter he was struggling to marry off.” Rhaena began to mutter unkind words under her breath towards their cousin that only made Visenya giggle harder. Rhaena came behind her and helped her pull the heavy purple gown on, helping lace it up while Visenya tugged on a pair of black shoes and then bringing her still slightly damp hair over her shoulder to braid it.

“Shall we?” Visenya asked with feigned lightheartedness when Rhaena finished, holding her arm out to her sister. Rhaena accepted it with a smile that was tinged with sadness and together they made their way back down to where their brother lay, fighting for his life. They relied on each other’s strength, keeping each other from delving too far into depression and worry as they sat vigil with their brother while their mother departed to write a grim letter to Jace.

As Visenya sat beside her brother she gripped his hand, bowing her head over it, and repeating her prayer to Balerion. *Fire and Blood*, she swore. *I will bring you fire and blood if you would leave me my brother.* Rhaena placed her hand atop Visenya's and squeezed, and then- as if she knew the words inside Visenya's mind- she whispered.

"Fire and Blood, sister. We will bring Fire and Blood to the Greens and to Aemond Targaryen."

Aemond stood in the small council room before his mother, grandfather, and Aegon. He fought to keep his expression neutral even as he stood there and informed them that he had quite possibly plunged the realm into a devastating war. Grandfather shook his head at him, his old face marred with anger at the news Aemond had brought. As Aemond stood before him and confessed himself to be possible kinslayer and a Targaryen without control of his dragon.

"You have lost only one eye, yet how is it that you are so blind?" Grandfather yelled, his anger exploding out of him but Aemond barely heard it to be honest. Instead, his mind was on what had happened, on how he had chased Luke around with Vhagar, using her to instill fear in his nephew only to completely lose control. In contrast he had watched as Visenya and Vermithor had gone into a steep dive, chasing after Luke. Her trust and connection with her dragon so deep that she had unchained herself and managed to catch Luke with the help of her massive beast. (A part of him wanted to laugh at the incredulousness of all of it, because of course she was a better fucking dragon rider than him. She was as good of a fighter as him, as smart or maybe even smarter than him, as witty as him, of course she was a better dragonrider).

"You have doomed us all." Mother whispered and Aemond flinched, devastated that he had disappointed her. He quickly made his way over to her, coming to stand beside her chair.

“Mother, I did not mean for it to happen the way it did.” He beseeched her quietly, keeping his voice low and as even as he could (trying to make sure his furious Grandfather could not hear him). Mother only shakes her head at him, bringing her hands up to bury them in her brown curls.

“You don’t know if he is actually dead, do you?” Aegon finally spoke up, his eyes dull and expression blank as he moved his gaze to meet Aemond’s, who shook his head in uncertainty.

“I do not know for sure, but with the blood he lost...” He trailed off. Aemond’s mouth quirked into a slight frown as he saw a quick flash of a long-lost emotion pass through Aegon’s eyes. A look he had when he had danced with Visenya and laughed with her at the disastrous (wonderful) family dinner. Those strains of affection he still held for their niece and nephews. But it disappeared as quickly as it had come and Aegon’s expression returned to one of no emotion.

Grandfather continued to yell for a long while while Mother bemoaned the fact that war was sure to come as well as the fact that her son had committed the gravest crime in the Faith and become a possible Kinslayer. (Aegon simply sat there staring at him with a slightly odd expression, but Aemond hardly registered it).

What Aemond was thinking of was Visenya. Of her bloodcurdling scream as Vhagar tore into Arrax, her screams at Vermithor as she commanded him to dive after Luke’s swiftly falling form. He had often dreamt of one day causing her (and Luke) the same stomach dropping terror he had felt when that knife came down on his eye. He had dreamt of vengeance, of their horrified screams, of an eye for an eye, (Visenya’s whispered apologies as she knelt at his feet for forgiveness). He had spent years imagining just how thrilling and amazing vengeance would be.

Yet why did he not feel satiated, satisfied and victorious at the fact that he had succeeded in drawing those screams from Visenya. That he had succeeded in bringing a look of sheer terror and horror that easily surpassed his when she had held him down while her brother gouged out his eye. Why instead of the victorious high did he feel a cold grip in his chest (was it horror, guilt? Was it worry? But Aemond would not cry for Visenya, who

would not love or care for her. He had made that path long ago. So why could he not pull his mind away from her? Why did her name and the thought of her burn brighter and fiercer inside of him than anything else?) it is not worth for her, Aemond thought fiercely, he was not concerned in the slightest with how she personally was feeling. No, what he was worried about was the consequences of her fear.

Aemond was plagued with hints of guilt and worry because Aemond knew Visenya. He had once threatened her brothers before, so many years ago, and in her rage she had helped to take his eye. What would Visenya do this time to avenge her brother? Burn down Kings Landing? Go to Oldtown and burn down any Hightower she could find? Sneak through the Red Keep and slaughter him in his sleep?

Gods Visenya was a vengeful being (and so was her father, the man he dreaded- the Rogue Prince) and he could not help but fill with trepidation at the thought of her Dragon Fire sparking to life and burning them all down in Luke's name.

He thought of her screams at him from Vermithor's back. Her High Valyrian piercing through the air as she swore blood and vengeance upon him. (He refused to think of the blood that had rushed south when she had snarled out her deliciously powerful High Valyrian in the Halls of Storm's End. Of how in those moments his anger had almost dissipated for a brief second as he bathed himself in the sound of her Valyrian).

He had reveled in Luke's terrified yells to his truly pathetically small dragon. He had laughed cruelly, delightedly as the baby dragon had flown so desperately to escape him but destined to always fail because the babe could never outrun the Queen of Dragons. In those moments Aemond had never felt more avenged, more thrilled, and more alive. (He had wished Visenya had been there in those moment to watch him chase Luke so she could scream her fear and beg him to stop.

But while Aemond hated his bastard nephew, and gods he hated him so much. (He hated Visenya more so, obsessively) but he was no Kinslayer. And now he could not deny that twist in his gut as he dreaded the Blacks

retaliation for his actions. (And he wondered where it had all spiraled out of his control.).

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